

DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATIVE AND HOLISTIC WESLEYAN MODEL FOR
MINISTERING DEEP LEVEL HEALING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
December 2020

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATIVE AND HOLISTIC WESLEYAN MODEL FOR MINISTERING DEEP-LEVEL HEALING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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This project explores how United Methodist clergy in the Skylands District of the Greater New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church could gain a theological, Biblical, and Wesleyan understanding and practice of deep-level healing. The hypothesis is that a theology and practice of deep-level healing is absent yet needed in these churches. This project proceeded with the belief that reclaiming this healing paradigm would impact the totality of pastoral ministry. Participant surveys, focus group interviews, and journals were used in this phenomenological study. The results suggest that holistic, deep-level healing integration is desired among United Methodist clergy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God and His mercy, freshly lavished upon me every day. Through His grace, I have been able to complete this program, during which I have heard His voice and seen His hand leading me into deep-level healing ministry. May this thesis and project point to a God who is still in the business of making all things new and healing those who call on His name in faith.

Thank you to my gifted and gracious wife, Amanda, who is the best partner on life's journey I could ever have. Thank you to my girls, Auden, Amelia, and Beatrice. Your laughter, smiles, and joy over the simple things in life bring me back to what really matters. May you know God's incredible love for you all the days of your lives.

I have the privilege of serving a supportive, welcoming, caring congregation that has cheered me on every step of the way and allowed for me to be in this program. The people of Belvidere United Methodist Church are exceptional in their generosity and a witness to God's extravagant grace. Thank you for providing me the time and resources to undertake this; it is my prayer that I am a better pastor as a result.

I want to recognize the faculty and mentors at United Theological Seminary that have worked with me, mentored me, shaped me, and shown me how to live into Charles Wesley's vision of uniting head and heart in devotion to God. Dr. Tom Jones, Dr. Tom Litteer, Dr. Andrew Park, Dr. Luther Oconor – I thank God for each of you. I am grateful for your encouragement, wisdom, and example of continually desiring more of God.

Thank you to my professional associates – Dr. Vivian Johnson, Rev. Dr. Matt Judkins, and Rev. Dr. Andrew Thompson. I am grateful for your friendship, encouragement, and dedication to serving Christ in the power of the Spirit.

Dr. David Watson, thank you for inviting me to Voice of the Apostles in 2016 and encouraging me to consider supernatural ministry and to check out the Randy Clark Scholars Doctor of Ministry focus group. Your work for the gospel of Jesus Christ is an example to me, and I am grateful for our friendship.

Along this journey, I have met many wonderful colleagues and friends who have shown me what a life yielded to the Holy Spirit looks like. Zach, Colleen, Mina, Ken, Clay, and Dani – I cherish each of you and I will miss our time together, yet the Holy Spirit who unites us will keep us bonded. Zach, what will I do without you showing me how to properly remove and install car seats?

I would not be where I am today if it were not for the ministry of Dr. Randy Clark and Global Awakening. Dr. Clark laid hands on me at Voice of the Apostles 2016 and prayed for me; when I got up off the floor, I was a different person. Dr. Clark, your teaching, passion for healing, and imparting to me what you received from God has changed the trajectory of my life. Thank you for letting the Holy Spirit use you in a mighty way.

DEDICATION

To Auden, Amelia, and Beatrice: this is for you. I love each of you and I love your questions and thoughts about God, faith, and church. You are so bright, insightful, caring, and empathic. Remember that you are loved and that God is our healer.

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Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour and glory, adoration and worship, both now and forever. Amen.

—John Wesley, “The One Thing Needful”

INTRODUCTION

In The United Methodist Church, there is little by way of a developed, robust theology and practice of God as healer. There are certainly bits and pieces here and there: prayers for God to heal someone beset by illness or nodding approval when God's healing activity is discussed. The Wesley brothers and the early Methodists held to the belief that God heals, that God would respond to prayer offered in faith, and that God's healing activity would take a variety of forms. Throughout the history of Methodism and the subsequent iterations of Wesleyanism, healing has been a core tenet of the movement. This thesis and project, then, has sought to re-introduce a theology and practice of deep-level healing¹ within a larger paradigm of normative Wesleyan discipleship. In other words, ministering deep healing through prayer is a part of being a follower of Jesus in a Wesleyan tradition that therefore can – and should – permeate all ministry.

The project was created to train and equip United Methodist clergy to integrate into their pastoral ministry a holistic approach to deep healing. Chapter one shares my personal journey into healing and my ministry context, both the local church that I serve and the larger denominational entity in which it is situated. Through this ministry focus, I was able to reflect on and bear witness to God's call on my life to dig more deeply into

¹ Deep-level healing is another term for inner healing and they are sometimes used interchangeably in this document.

healing ministry, especially as it relates to the emotional and spiritual wounds and hurts under which so many labor.

Chapter two delves deeply into a Biblical foundation for healing and uses the story of blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 to do so. This healing narrative is the only one in the canonical gospels that tell us that Bartimaeus “immediately he...followed Jesus.” This chapter situates healing within a larger paradigm of discipleship; that is, the nature of healing and how it relates to a life of following Jesus. It posits the thesis that healing can be an entry point into a relationship with Jesus Christ, or, for the believer, the impetus for a more intimate walk.

The historical foundations for healing are set forth in chapter three. This chapter deals mostly with primary texts from the early Methodist movement, examining John Wesley’s journals, letters, and selections from other works, and Charles Wesley’s hymnody, in an effort to ascertain how the nascent Methodist movement understood and practiced healing. This chapter posits that the early Methodists held to healing and it influenced their doctrine, discipline, and liturgy.

Chapter four establishes theological foundations for healing. In keeping with the theme of integration, this chapter examines a few doctrines and puts them in conversation with each other in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of not only what healing is, but how healing might look in the local church. It begins with a look at Wesley’s understanding of grace and the *imago Dei* and puts pneumatology and ecclesiology in conversation to integrate healing, the Holy Spirit, and the church.

An examination of interdisciplinary foundations for healing constitutes chapter five. In this chapter, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a paradigm under the larger

umbrella of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, converses with Truth Therapy, a model developed by Dr. Pete Bellini that centers on renewal of the mind after the things of God. This chapter discusses how attending to the inner self through a thoughtful, Spirit-led examination of thoughts, attitudes, and values can dramatically impact an individual and be a catalyst for deep-level healing.

The final chapter builds upon these four foundational chapters as it describes, analyses, and assesses the action research project that took place with several United Methodist clergy. The purpose of this project was to combine teaching and practice in a training program for United Methodist pastors; it laid a theological, Biblical, and Wesleyan foundation for deep-level healing and offered several prayer models through which one might minister healing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The hypothesis of the project was that a theology and practice of deep-level healing is absent in United Methodist churches, despite a Biblical and Wesleyan warrant for such a practice and that training in such a paradigm would impact the totality of the participants' ministry, offering them confidence in ministering deep-level healing across their entire ministry. Through theological reflection and practical engagement, participants were able to explore how deep-level healing might inform and permeate all of pastoral ministry, from church council meetings to pastoral care visits to corporate worship.

This project was titled "An Integrative, Holistic, Wesleyan Practice of Inner Healing." It relied on qualitative data and utilized three qualitative data sets: pre and post-project surveys, written reflections on five prayer encounters, and interviews. The data was examined with an eye toward ascertaining participant's experience, theology, practice, and desire for growth in deep-level healing. All seven United Methodist pastor

participants indicated growth in understanding and practice of deep-level healing and a desire for further training and integration of this practice in their ministries. After analyzing the data, the chapter concludes with reflections on future areas of research and how the project might look different in the future.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

My ministry context is the Skylands District of The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey, and specifically my appointment to the Belvidere United Methodist Church in Belvidere, New Jersey. I began this appointment in July 2016 and serve as the senior pastor. The church is home to a variety of theological and political viewpoints, ranging from very liberal to very conservative. The church is located in the county seat and is in a rural part of western New Jersey. The church is multigenerational, but not at all diverse in terms of culture and ethnicity. It is an overwhelmingly white congregation, and middle class. While my project will train other United Methodist clergy in the history, theology, and practice of healing ministry with a clear, particular emphasis on issues of deep-level healing, my context analysis will focus on my appointment, Belvidere United Methodist Church, since this will be the site where I will deploy the results of my training and hold healing services from *The United Methodist Book of Worship*.

I will first discuss the clergy participants that will comprise the main thrust of this project, and then move to a detailed study of the Belvidere United Methodist Church and its community. I have chosen seven United Methodist clergy in the Warren County, New Jersey area. Four of them are licensed local pastors, two are ordained elders, and one is

an ordained deacon; three are women, four are men. They range in age from late 30's to early 60's. Some of them are seasoned pastors, and others have been in ministry for a couple of years. I live and minister in a rural area of New Jersey, and these churches are also rural. The largest one is in a church of around 1500 members ranging from the poor to upper-middle class professionals and is ethnically mixed. The person participating in this study is on staff as an ordained deacon, responsible for overseeing ministries of justice and mercy. The six remaining participants pastor small, rural congregations that are overwhelmingly middle-class and Caucasian.

I have chosen to focus on training fellow United Methodist clergy. Due to the confidential nature of many deep-healing situations and the potentially sensitive issues that could arise when ministering this sort of healing, focusing on training clergy who have had education and experience in boundaries and pastoral care is imperative. These United Methodist pastors have also had training in Wesleyan theology, which means they will already have a foundation upon which I can build with my training. These pastors have all expressed an interest in training in deep-level healing ministry and have indicated they believe their ministries will receive an overall benefit from this training.

A second component of this project – and this is where a detailed study of the Belvidere United Methodist Church intersects with the project – is to utilize the Service of Healing found in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Clergy will be trained in a Wesleyan theology of healing and best practices for deep-level healing, and then asked to lead this service in their church context. I have decided to integrate this into the project, with the belief that this service is a good way to introduce a ministry of healing into

congregations that have had little or no encounter with this aspect of ministry. I will also employ this service at the Belvidere United Methodist Church.

The Belvidere United Methodist Church is a truly hospitable congregation, welcoming new people, caring for long-time members, and embracing all in between. It is a church that values community, and seeks many opportunities for fellowship, whether through small groups, potlucks, mission projects, or coffee hour after worship. The mission statement of the church is as follows: “Living Faith. Growing Hope. Sharing Love.” This statement was born out of intentional conversation and reflection on the church’s identity and role in the community. The leadership team decided on this statement because it reflects that the church is both the gathered community and the sent community; the church focuses on faith, hope, and love both in our worship and programs so that the church can make a difference for Jesus Christ in the world.

Changing the culture of the Belvidere church has been a priority from the beginning of my tenure. I am convinced that a healthy, Biblical congregation is intentionally intergenerational and values all people and the spiritual gifts with which they may edify the body. With this core value in mind, I have promoted mission opportunities that bring together families in outreach, offered opportunities for all ages to participate in corporate worship, and sought to allow children and youth to take charge of their ministries. This cultural shift has been tremendous. It has led to greater unity and cooperation in the church, and families have reported greater spiritual growth as a unity as a result of worshipping together.

Belvidere United Methodist Church has not been immune to national church trends that seem to affect churches regardless of denomination, theological orientation,

size, and geographic location. Participation in worship attendance, youth activities, children's ministries, small groups, even turnout for church deep-levels — all of these have declined in the past few decades. One of the most significant issues in my context is the relative lack of involvement and participation from young families. Other activities such as sports, vacations, and school programs constantly compete with church attendance and participation. This de-prioritization of church involvement has a number of consequences upon the larger church body. It especially impacts ministry development and lay leadership. A continual conversation among the leadership in the Belvidere church centers on ways to engage and connect with those nominal church attenders in meaningful, authentic ways. Our desire is to see people connected to the church not just as another way to fill time, but because they are finding sincere spiritual connection and growing closer in their walk with God.

A second need in the ministry context is for a deeper, more vital engagement with the Scriptures and foundational faith claims. It is my observation that many mainline congregations (e.g. United Methodist, Episcopal, United Church of Christ) have emphasized social justice and mission engagement yet have done poorly in intentional spiritual formation and faith development. A holistic, Biblical Christian must lay claim to both vibrant faith and good works. The Biblical pattern holds that the latter necessarily flows from the former. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, emphasized that both personal piety and social engagement were critical to a life of holiness. With that in mind, I have begun a series of small groups at the Belvidere church that have focused on how the Biblical canon developed, an Old and New Testament

overview, and will soon begin a small group that teaches basic Christian beliefs. This foundation is crucial in order to have a fruitful Christian walk and witness, and has laid appropriate groundwork for my project.

While continuing to build a Biblical foundation at the Belvidere church, I am also introducing some charismatic elements of Christian practice, but this is relatively new and occurring slowly. There is still some suspicion among some segments of the church regarding healing prayer, prophecy, and other *charismata*. Popular television preachers and other scandals and excesses within the Pentecostal/charismatic movement have led some to view the movement with hesitancy. However, I have found that education, along with slow integration in corporate worship, has, thus far, proven my hunch to be correct: once people see the impact made in people's lives when these *charismata* are nurtured and employed, they begin to desire more of it.

One way I have attempted this introduction is through prayer and anointing with oil. I have begun doing this during celebration of holy communion. Belvidere United Methodist Church observes communion on the first Sunday of each month. After the liturgy has been celebrated, there are two stations for receiving at the front of the sanctuary. Instead of being a communion server, I have stood on the side to anoint with oil and pray over those who have received communion. The first time this was offered, I did not expect much participation, since this was a new practice and unfamiliar to many; much to my great pleasure, about twenty-five came forward to prayer. I asked each person their prayer request, anointed them with oil in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then laid hands on them and prayed. The response was overwhelming.

People were crying, praising God, and experiencing God's presence. Follow up with many of them has revealed that they have in fact experienced healing.

Another way I have begun introducing moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit is through individual and small group conversations. A recent small group focused on the early Methodist movement and utilized the book *Revival* by Adam Hamilton. In the book, he discusses the experience John Wesley had at a meeting held at Aldersgate Street in London on May 24, 1738. It is as follows:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading from Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.¹

John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate Street became a watershed moment in his life and a landmark in Methodism. It was the witness of God's Spirit with his own spirit, convincing him that he had been justified through the grace of God. It changed his entire life and these sorts of experiential encounters with God's Spirit became a foundational concept in the Methodist movement.

During this small group session, as we were discussing this Aldersgate experience, someone asked me if I had ever had a supernatural encounter with God. I related how God touched my life at a Voice of the Apostles conference through Randy Clark's impartation time, and how that changed the course of my ministry, leading me to desire more of God's presence. This led to others in the group sharing their own

¹ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 103.

experiences of God touching their lives; some shared these instances for the first time ever at that small group. This was a personal, meaningful way to introduce some of the congregation to moving in and expecting God's supernatural movement.

Ministry Journey

Upon reflection on my spiritual autobiography, I know that God has been developing me as a pastor and spiritual leader from early childhood. My first memories are related to church, to Sunday School, and to pretending to be a preacher; even at the young age of five years old, I knew God was forming me to preach and teach the gospel. While I resisted the call for a few years during my college years, God persisted, and I began seminary in 2009, entered parish ministry in 2012, and was ordained an elder in The United Methodist Church in 2015.

My seminary education was imbued with theological liberalism. Every possible progressive social cause was embraced with fundamentalist fervor, and core tenets of Biblical Christianity, such as the authority of Scripture, the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, Christ's substitutionary atonement, and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were deconstructed in almost every class. For some time, I welcomed this new theological persuasion, mostly because it was novel to me. However, during the course of my pastoral ministry, my theology has shifted significantly, and this has certainly affected my pastoral ministry and pastoral identity.

There were several convergent dynamics and experiences that resulted in this shift from liberal to conservative. Experience pastoring the local church contributed to my rejection of theological liberalism. In the day-to-day duties of ministry, from visiting the

sick, attending meetings, leading Bible studies, and more, I discovered that liberalism was doing nothing to offer people hope and healing. People were hungry for an encounter with the living God, with finding hope in their faith, with discovering the relevance of God's Word for daily living. Due to the deconstructive approach to faith that my seminary education had given me, I found myself unable to offer anything authentically life-giving to my people, primarily because I did not have a life-changing personal relationship with God.

The single most formative event in shifting my theology was in the fall of 2015. The depression to personal and professional issues was unlike anything I had ever felt before. It was paralyzing; there were days when it took every ounce of energy to just make it to my office. A friend encouraged me to read books by Randy Clark. The first book I read was *Biblical Guidebook to Deliverance*, and it changed my life. It presented me with a theological and spiritual paradigm that I did not receive in seminary; the focus on the reality of the supernatural, including how to combat demonic powers, gave me the tools and vocabulary to address my own struggles. That experience and that book opened me up to receive more of the supernatural.

Through the help of colleagues, friends, and my own spiritual endeavors, I developed into an evangelical, committed to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and leading people into divine encounters. Attending Voice of the Apostles, connecting to Global Awakening, and developing relationships with others within this movement have all led me to embrace a theology that views the Bible as inspired and authoritative, that understands the person and work of Jesus Christ as unique and necessary for our

salvation, and the continued, ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit, working in believers for sanctification and bestowing gifts for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

This personal theological shift has affected my pastoral ministry and leadership in a variety of ways. Most obviously has been in my preaching and teaching. Instead of offering sermons skeptical of the supernatural and filled with social justice platitudes, my preaching is focused on the Scriptural revelation and reality of the Triune God and His desire to redeem and restore. Instead of teaching Bible studies and small groups that were scrubbed of classical Christian emphases, my teaching is centered on the Scriptures as authoritative and relevant for daily life. Even beyond preaching and teaching, my pastoral care, leadership style, involvement in children's ministries — all of this has been transformed because I have been transformed by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. Through my own personal experiences and discussion with others, I have come to believe this is the Biblical norm: as one has powerful encounters with the supernatural, this leads to substantial shifts in one's internal spiritual life.

One important result of this transformation has been an interest in the supernatural in early Methodism. Through reading and research, I have discovered that John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Francis Asbury, Phoebe Palmer, and other early Methodist leaders believed in the power of the gospel and in the supernatural work of God made evident in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the early Methodists, a disciplined spiritual life was the product of the work of the Holy Spirit, and was understood as a necessary reforming element within the established church. It was common for early Methodists to pray for the sick, to have ecstatic worship experiences, to see God's miraculous hand at work. While it would be anachronistic to describe the early

Methodists as charismatic, there are clear lines from the early Methodist movement to contemporary charismatic Christian expressions.

Intentional engagement in spiritual formation is my deepest passion in pastoral ministry. When people find breakthrough in their lives, when they grasp a Biblical or theological truth for the first time, or when someone commits their life to being a disciple — these are the moments that provide me with renewed energy and enthusiasm for the work of the ministry. I seek to engage in this formation in all aspects of my ministry: through preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and even administration. All pastoral duties are opportunities for spiritual growth.

Intentional, methodical spiritual development is one of the most hallmarks of Methodism. This intentionality is reflected in the very name of the movement — *Methodists*. The Wesley brothers and the other early Methodists began their renewal movement, they gathered together in small groups to engage in prayer, Scripture study, works of mercy and piety, and accountability. This rigorous devotional approach the spiritual life is absent in many United Methodist communities today, and a reclamation of the movement's earliest practices is necessary if Methodism is to be the spiritually relevant movement it was in the 18th century.

My ministry skills and interests shifted dramatically after I had a life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit. During the 2016 Voice of the Apostles conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, an annual conference hosted by Randy Clark's ministry Global Awakening, two people laid hands on me and imparted spiritual gifts. Both times hands were laid on me, I fell out under the power of the Holy Spirit. After getting up off the floor for the second time, I knew everything had changed. As a result of that encounter, I

experience greater power in my ministry, and it has affected all aspects of the pastoral vocation: preaching, teaching, prayer, and more. It also inculcated within me a desire to create an atmosphere of encounter within my ministry context, and to teach that these sorts of encounters with the power of God are not only Biblical, but Wesleyan.

Currently, I am most passionate about corporate prayer. God has been convicting me that prayer is **the** way that people will receive power and experience deliverance and healing, and that it is important this happen within the context of corporate worship whenever possible. There are several ways I have been trying to develop an atmosphere of prayer at the Belvidere church. I began a Tuesday morning prayer group that meets in the sanctuary. While this has been sparsely attended, those who have attended have expressed a real sense of God's presence and provision as a result of that prayer time. As mentioned above, I have incorporated anointing with oil and prayer for healing during celebration of the Eucharist. I also have been preaching on prayer and exploring it more deeply in small groups. All of this is in response to what God has revealed to me: that to move in power, His people must be people of prayer.

Synergy

My Doctor of Ministry project will focus on educating and training United Methodist in a paradigm that both teaches the history and theology of healing, and in particular deep-level healing, within the Methodist movement and practical, hands-on training in how to engage in this ministry. This project will involve intentional teaching on history and theology, practical instruction in how to pray for healing, and how Wesleyan discipleship and healing complement each other and form an integrative

paradigm. Participants will then put this into practice in both praying for individuals in their ministry context and offering corporate healing services based on the rubric in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. The intended effects of this training program are both personal and corporate; it will seek personal and professional spiritual growth of church leaders and edification of the entire Body of Christ as the healing ministry becomes integrated into the larger ministries of the local church and pastoral practice.

This project combines both the needs of the ministry context and my skills and interests in ministry. As mentioned above, holiness is the foundational concept to Wesleyan² theology and practice; all else flows from this core principle. When at the Methodist Conference it was asked, “What may we reasonably believe to be God’s design in raising up the Preachers called Methodist,” the answer was, “to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.”³ The early Methodists believe that the established church had largely forsaken holiness, and had capitulated to culture and had embraced a cold, formal religion. The chief desire of Methodism was to reform the church with holiness. Therefore, from its inception, holiness, expressed in both personal piety and acts of mercy, has been the essence of the Methodist movement.

Scripture is clear that God desires holy people. First Peter records that “just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am

² This paper uses “Wesleyan” and “Methodist” or “United Methodist” mostly interchangeably. Wesleyan is the larger umbrella covering several denominations or “streams”; United Methodist is one of these denominations.

³ “To Spread Scriptural Holiness Throughout the Land,” accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.catalystresources.org/consider-wesley-37/>

holy.”⁴ The author of Hebrews states that the believer is to “make every effort to live in peace with everyone, and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”⁵ God desires holiness in his people; to be holy is to share in God’s very nature. Holiness should be the hallmark of every believer’s life.

It is my proposition deep-level healing is connected to more a more intimate, loving relationship with God and others, and, as such, will have far-reaching affects within the life of the church, making the Body of Christ more holy and set apart for service to God and others. Developing an integrative, holistic approach to deep-level healing anchored in the Wesleyan tradition is one way to do this. The term “integrative” refers to integrating various theories and practices of deep-level healing prayer into the larger ministry of healing. It will also intentionally integrate a variety of doctrines as it develops a theology of healing; doctrines such as pneumatology, ecclesiology, and the particular Wesleyan soteriological emphasis on the restoration of the *imago Dei* within the individual. An holistic approach focuses on how each part integrates into the whole; in this case, how healing relates to each part of the individual – body, soul, and spirit – to bring that into alignment with God’s design. Deep-level healing operates with the belief that attending to bringing a divine encounter to the hurts, wounds, and trauma of the past has an impact on every area of life and the entirety of one’s identity.

The core of this project is not only to develop clergy leaders who know about healing within the Methodist movement, but also to lead clergy who in turn lead lay

⁴ 1 Peter 1:15-16

⁵ Hebrews 12:14

people into supernatural encounters with the living God. It has been my experience in my context that healing – what John Wimber termed power encounters – leads to an increased discipleship, a life of testimony, and a deeper Christian walk. It has transformative effects both on individual discipleship and corporate worship. Such encounters can spur people on to desiring more of God and wanting to devote more of themselves to Him. Since that is a need I have identified in my context, I am eager to explore the connection between individual and corporate discipleship and supernatural encounters.

The training in how to pray for and minister deep-level healing is in keeping with the emphases of my context and a spiritual desire that God has given me. In my context, there is a passion to learn how to pray, and the introduction of healing prayer during my pastoral tenure has been well received. There are several area United Methodist pastors and several leaders in the church I pastor who already engage in prayer ministry. One lay person from Belvidere UMC spends a significant amount of time on the phone praying with people, and often gives testimony of the efficacy of that prayer time. Another person writes personal prayers in cards and sends them to shut ins, those who are hospitalized, and more. During Sunday worship and in joint healing services with another local United Methodist Church, individuals have had hands laid on them and prayer offered for healing. As a result, we have seen multiple instances of cancer being healed and numerous people experiencing deep-level healing. In the future, I am interested in utilizing those in my ministry context who have already had experience in praying for healing for others in forming a healing prayer team.

My project will be as follows: a training program that combines Biblical, theological, and Wesleyan resources and practical prayer paradigms for ministering deep-level healing. Each participant will then put this into practice as they engage in five prayer encounters in their ministry context. One area of anticipated growth among participants is an increased awareness of how healing functions in both their own discipleship and within the totality of their pastoral ministry.

The practical prayer portion of the training program will include readings, including Randy Clark's Five-Step Prayer Model, Scriptures related to healing prayer, and Wesleyan resources that discuss healing prayer. This portion of the project will be more hands on than the former; participants will be required to pray five times, record their experience, and follow up with the person with whom they prayed. As much as possible, the prayer for healing will occur in person, rather than over the phone or other form of communication. They may pray for a loved one, someone in the hospital, a nursing home, during a church meeting or corporate worship, or another context. As mentioned above, the need may be for physical healing or deep-level healing (emotional needs, mental health needs, and more). Follow-up will be imperative, for the participant must report on how the prayer was received, the efficacy of the prayer, if the person received healing, and any other pertinent data.

Finally, the participants will be asked to use the Service of Healing in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. This service utilizes traditional aspects of Protestant liturgy, including a call to worship, unison prayer, Scripture reading, and a homily. All of the aspects of the liturgy focus on God's healing activity and his desire to answer prayer. The service culminates with anointing with oil and a prayer for healing. It is most fitting that

the service contain a service of Holy Communion; however, that will be up to the leader whether or not to include that. Since this service comprises official denominational liturgy, it is my belief that this will serve as a key entry point into healing for the United Methodist lay person who has no background in healing ministry.

While there are many implications to this project, the main focus of the project is to determine if leaders within the Wesleyan movement develop personal and professional growth and ministry integration as they gain a greater understanding of the history and theology of healing within their own movement and gather experience in ministering healing. Some of my guiding questions will be: as leaders engage in prayer, how do they understand and incorporate those experiences into their overall ministry? As people experience the supernatural power of God, do those experiences have a measurable effect on their personal discipleship?

The number of participants will be limited to eight, and they will be selected by me. I will select United Methodist clergy who evidence a life of discipleship, who desire greater spiritual depth, and who already have somewhat of a foundation in Wesleyan thought. The participants will also be diverse in gender, age, and ministry experience, and also come from diverse United Methodist congregations: small and large, rural and suburban, and ethnically diverse. They will also be clergy who are pastoring churches in the Skylands District of the Greater New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church.

I will collect data on this project in a variety of ways. There will be a pre- and post-training survey for participants that will contain pre-written questions designed to gauge their current spiritual lives and practices of ministry as it relates to Wesleyan

discipleship and healing prayer. I will interview participants, both before and after the training. Some of the questions will remain the same in the pre-and post-surveys; this is to help ascertain how growth and change during the project. Participants will be asked to keep a journal during the training, and to record both their spiritual growth and their experiences praying for others. The journaling prompts will consist of five questions that I have developed; they will be the same set of criteria for each prayer encounter. Finally, the clergy participants will complete a follow-up survey in an attempt to measure the effects of the project. This will allow for measuring the efficacy of the project as it pertains to the clergyperson's ministry context and their own growth in both theology and practice of deep-level healing.

Conclusion

I have already touched on several desired learning outcomes from this project. Let me summarize here: local United Methodist clergy and the Belvidere United Methodist Church are both poised to go deeper into God's supernatural activity. Ministry experience with colleagues in my area and within my church speak to this potential breakthrough. A foundation has and is being laid that emphasizes a return to Wesleyanism and fostering a culture of prayer. The project's main desired learning outcome is to develop a training program that is both educational and hands-on that teaches people how to minister deep-level healing. My desire is that as clergy learn about the history and theology of healing within the Wesleyan movement, as they engage in the practice of praying for deep-level healing, and as they employ denominational services centered on healing, this will have a measurable impact on their both their spiritual development and their commitment to the

larger body of Christ. Ultimately, it is my desire that Wesleyan believers become more deeply committed disciples of Jesus Christ through ministering healing.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The relationship between healing and discipleship – a relationship with God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and a deepening love for God, neighbor, and self – is an important one to explore. An examination of the Biblical witness from Genesis to the Hebrew prophets, from the Gospels to Revelation, reveals some significant links between healing, whether physical, spiritual, or emotional, and the call to a life of faith. In the Old Testament, there are clear connections between health and obeying the laws of God: for example, the Torah expresses over and over again the relationship between healing and holiness.¹ The Old Testament Prophetic literature is rife with exhortations to experience the health that comes from a right relationship with God (Isaiah 30:18-26; 38:16; Hosea 7:1; Nahum 3:19). In the Gospels, healing stories are often linked to discipleship; more specifically, healing provokes a response that

¹ Holiness is a central concept of discipleship; in fact, it is its cornerstone. Holiness became central to the early Methodist movement, and is therefore of interest to the author, who is part of the Wesleyan movement. Hebrews 12:14 records “without holiness no one will see the Lord.” For Torah examples of the relationship between holiness and healing, see Exodus 23:25-26; Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 7:14-15; 28:1-14.

recognizes the person and power of Jesus Christ and often a desire to respond with discipleship (Matthew 9:27-31; Mark 5:18-20; Luke 5:24-26).

My own faith tradition – the Wesleyan movement – has a rich history of emphasizing both healing and discipleship; more specifically, healing as a normative practice within a committed Christian life. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, began this parachurch effort with the desire “to spread Scriptural holiness across the land.”² Early Methodists focused on discipleship by attending upon “the means of grace,” such as fasting, prayer, Scripture reading, and more; these were ways to deepen faith and grow in knowledge and love of God. Wesley and his fellow Methodists understood holiness as having two distinct yet inseparable iterations: personal and social holiness, the former being attendance upon personal growth in Christian faith, the latter centering on reforming social practices and institutions. This comprises an integrative and holistic view of discipleship, one that affects both the entire individual and society. A robust “method” of discipleship became a hallmark of this movement.

This study will focus on the following New Testament text: Mark 10:46-52, the story of Blind Bartimaeus. This text was selected due to its themes of discipleship and healing, and the unique features of this story, which cause it to function as both a miracle story and a call story. This pericope is also instructive in many ways for how contemporary disciples of Jesus might understand how healing can and should lead to a lifetime of following Jesus. For the purposes of this paper, I am defining discipleship in

² "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., and Others, from the Year 1744 to the Year 1789 : Wesleyan Methodist Church : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming." Internet Archive. January 01, 1970. Accessed May 04, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/07939280.2122.emory.edu>.

light of its Markan context, and as such, it comprises both a confession of who Jesus is and a willingness to follow him “along the road,” a way that may include suffering and death. Discipleship is cruciform living.

As I exegete Mark’s account of the Blind Bartimaeus story for dominant themes regarding discipleship and healing, it will be necessary to establish a brief understanding of blindness in the ancient world. Then, I will examine the wider context of Mark 10:46-52. To that end, I will begin by comparing Mark 10:46-52 with Mark 8:22-26 at length, and Luke’s version of the same story in Luke 18:35-43.³ Then, I will spend time just on Mark 10:46-52, exegeting its most immediate context (Mark 10:35-45) and then the pericope itself for its themes of healing and discipleship. In all of this exegetical work, I will show that Blind Bartimaeus is set forth as the prime example of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, this paper will develop the thesis that healing and discipleship are inextricably linked, that healing should necessarily lead to and become an integral component of discipleship, to “following Jesus along the road,” and that both are necessary for an authentic Christian witness in the world today.

Before entering into these texts, a word regarding hermeneutics and guiding beliefs is in order. I accept the Scriptural canon as authoritative, and that the texts are both accurate and inspired by the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Holy Spirit illuminates the words of Scripture, guiding the reader into deeper and fuller meaning; indeed, the Holy Spirit is our most reliable hermeneutic. Attention to historical, cultural, and social

³ Matthew 20:29-34 also contains a similar healing story to both Mark and Luke. However, Matthew relates the healing of two blind men and leaves out significant detail that both Mark and Luke relate. Therefore, it will not be considered in this paper.

contexts is also imperative in accessing the texts. While context is vital, Scripture is not context-bound, however, but the living word of the living God. Finally, it is my conviction that God is still calling people to a lifetime of discipleship, that He still heals today, and that the Bible teaches that the normative way that divine healing is realized is through the faith of the recipient.

Blindness in Antiquity

In the Greco-Roman world, perfection was the ideal: perfection in philosophy, art, politics, and even the body. With perfection as the standard, any sort of disability was a shortcoming; however, it was not just a physical liability. Disability – and therefore blindness – implied a spiritual/moral issue as well. In Greco-Roman literature, blindness was portrayed as a most pitiable condition. Tiresias, a famous character in Greek Mythology who appears in such well-known Greek works as Sophocles' *Antigone* and *The Bacchae* by Euripides and is replete with all sorts of divining qualities, is nonetheless reliant on others to “see” for him and to lead him around. There are numerous other ancient works that could be cited to prove this point.

Chad Hartstock writes that to an ancient audience, a blind individual would by implication also have a moral or spiritual malady: “[they] would not only think of blindness on the literal level – lacking eyesight – but [they] would also likely think in metaphorical terms, that is, lacking *spiritual* vision (emphasis his).”⁴ It is reasonable,

⁴ Chad Hartstock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), 53.

then, to assume that the Biblical audience – crowds, disciples, onlookers, and later the readers/hearers of the gospel writings – would have made spiritual assumptions about those who were physically blind. Therefore, when examining Bartimaeus, a blind Biblical character, it will be most interesting to see how he maintains or breaks the stereotype of an ancient blind character: one that is helpless, pitiful, and also morally/spiritual disabled.

Mark 8:22-26

To begin developing the broader Markan context for 10:46-52, it will be necessary to compare this pericope with the other blind healing story in Mark, 8:22-26 (NIV):

They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

Scholars place Mark 8:22-26 at the transition between the first and second part of Mark's gospel, with 10:46-52 closing out the second part. That two healing stories of blindness bookend this portion of Mark is significant, offering instruction on the relationship between sight and discipleship, that truly "seeing" Jesus for who he is and being willing to follow him to Jerusalem comprises the core of discipleship. Mary Healy writes that "the two miracles of recovery of sight form a frame around the journey

narrative, symbolizing the disciples' gradual growth in understanding.⁵ Hartstock echoes this when he writes that a common way to understand this section of Mark is to see "the two stories bracketing a section dealing with the blindness of the disciples, and the blind stories serve as a kind of interpretive key to the stories in between."⁶ Further, he writes "it is difficult to imagine that an ancient auditor would not have connected the two stories [Mark 8:22-26 and 10:46-52]."⁷ Therefore, these two healing stories serve as interpretive lenses through which to view the content between them.

At this point it would be most helpful to define exactly what sort of discipleship Mark presents. Marvin Meyer writes the following:

For Mark the applause – and the belief – that come from the spectacular deeds of the miracle stories are insufficient for true discipleship. To confess Jesus as just another Greco-Roman divine man and Son of God, remarkable from birth and outstanding in deeds of power, is not enough for Mark. To applaud Jesus for healings, exorcisms, and the like is easy – too easy. To follow Jesus through health, wealth, and success is also easy – too easy. To follow Jesus to the cross is much more difficult.⁸

That Mark's concept of discipleship is inextricably linked to suffering is evident by a simple cursory glance through the gospel. In Mark 8:31-33, Peter's inability to grasp suffering as necessary for the Messiah (and by association, his disciples) is met with a stern rebuke from Jesus. Further, Jesus told his disciples in Mark 8:35 that "whoever

⁵ Mary Healy, *The Gospel of Mark: Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 158.

⁶ Hartstock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts*, 157.

⁷ Hartstock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts*, 157.

⁸ Marvin Meyer, "Taking Up the Cross and Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark," *Calvin Theological Journal* 37 (2002): 230-238, accessed April 5, 2018, www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcpi/fulltext/ctj/88087.pdf

wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” To take up one’s cross is not an invitation to a life of pleasure and happiness; it is to carry the very instrument by which one might suffer and die. Discipleship in Mark, therefore, is an endeavor to journey with Jesus wherever he goes – even to the place of suffering and death.

The immediate context of Mark 8:22-26 is similar to the healing of Bartimaeus in 10:46-52, which will be elucidated later in the paper. Directly before Jesus and the disciples enter Bethsaida, the disciples once again misunderstand Jesus, and Jesus replies in verse 18: “Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?” Thus, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida is doubly poignant, with blindness and sight assuming both physical and symbolic meaning.

An initial comparison between these stories reveals significant differences. The following chart highlights them:

Mark 8:22-26	Mark 10:46-52
Healing occurs in Bethsaida	Healing occurs in Jericho
Man is unnamed	Man is named Bartimaeus
Man is physically assisted by others	Bartimaeus is by himself along the road
Others ask for healing on behalf of the man	Bartimaeus calls out on his own
No indication man knows of Jesus	Bartimaeus addresses him as Son of David
Jesus leads the man outside of town	Bartimaeus gets up and goes to Jesus

Jesus spits on the man's eyes and uses hands	Jesus heals Bartimaeus by a word
Healing occurs in two stages	Healing occurs instantaneously
Healed man is sent home	Bartimaeus follows Jesus along the road

The differences between these two healing narratives are significant. In Mark 8:22-26, the helplessness of the blind man is evident. He is brought to Jesus by others and is totally reliant on the people and on Jesus to lead him. In Mark 10:46-52, Bartimaeus exhibits some agency, as he is begging alongside the road and gets up and goes to Jesus; nothing in the text indicates that others physically assisted him in getting to Jesus. In Mark 8:22-26, the healing occurs in two stages: the first contact with Jesus gives him partial sight. This is likely an interpretive tool through which to understand and frame the disciples' difficulty in truly grasping discipleship. Verse 24 relates that the blind man could see people, but that "they look like trees walking around." For him to be able to differentiate between people and trees implies that he was not blind from birth. In Mark 10:46-52, Bartimaeus is healed instantly as a result of his faith. Mark records no physical contact between Bartimaeus and Jesus.

Kent Brower is instructive on the relationship between these two healing narratives when he writes the following, speaking specifically of Mark 8:22-26:

When the notions of narrative sequence and intratextuality are considered, the point of the story becomes clear. Juxtaposed between Jesus' exasperated comment on the blindness of the disciples and the open confession of Peter in 8:27-29, the story prepares readers for the opening of the eyes of the disciples but also for their failure to see clearly. Their eyes are gradually opened along the journey from 8:27 to 10:52, but they still do not see clearly. Mark seems to believe they will have

clarity of sight only when they understand the significance of the cross and the resurrection.⁹

The trajectory of Mark 8:22-26 to Mark 10:46-52 reveals important aspects of the movement of discipleship. If one reads these healing stories as bracketing teaching on discipleship and themselves offering insight into that very body of teaching, then the implications are clear: the ideal disciple is one who endeavors to follow Jesus and in doing so, endeavors to move from helplessness and namelessness to deeper spiritual insight, a desire to see, and a willingness to follow. There will doubtless be times of blindness as one grows as a disciple; however, the example of these stories in relation to discipleship reveal that following Jesus should lead to greater spiritual clarity.

There are two other points of comparison which warrant further discussion here. First, the two stories seem to indicate something about initiative and discipleship. As mentioned above, the man in Mark 8:22-26 does not exhibit initiative; he is brought to Jesus by others and the others ask for healing on his behalf. Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 couldn't be more different. He is the one who calls out to Jesus and goes to him, all without the physical aid of others. If we view Mark 8:22-10:52 as presenting the ideal trajectory of discipleship, and Bartimaeus as the ideal disciple, then initiative in seeking the healing touch of Jesus and following him on the way is integral to discipleship.

The second significant point of comparison to note is the ending to each pericope. Mark 8:26 says that the healed man is sent home and told to avoid the village. On the other hand, Bartimaeus follows Jesus, presumably into Jerusalem and to Jesus' passion.

⁹ Kent Browser, *Mark: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City, MI: Beacon Hill Press, 2012), 225.

The reason the first man is sent home under command of silence is not immediately apparent; perhaps it is in keeping with Mark's emphasis on the messianic secret.

However, it seems reasonable to read 8:26 within the broader theme of discipleship, and the verses immediately following it might offer some insight.

Mark 8:27-33 records Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah. Mary Healy states that "Peter's confession of faith [8:27-30] is the turning point in the Gospel. It is a breakthrough, a burst of light, symbolized by the healing of the blind man just recounted (8:22-26)." ¹⁰ It is as if the proverbial scales have also fallen from Peter's eyes as he recognizes Jesus as the Messiah. However, as Healy writes, "to grasp *that* Jesus is the Messiah is not the same as understanding what it means to be the Messiah."¹¹ Peter still has much sight to (re)gain in understanding what it means to be a disciple. This is evident by Peter's insistence that the Messiah must not suffer, and Jesus' subsequent rebuke. Given these verses and the teaching and trajectory of discipleship from 8:22-10:52, it is reasonable to read the blind man in 8:22-26 as one who recognizes Jesus as the Messiah but is not clear on all that entails. Contrast this to Bartimaeus, who joins Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. Bartimaeus understands both who the Messiah is and what the Messiah must do.

Luke 18:35-43

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but

¹⁰ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 213, 159.

¹¹ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 159.

he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "LORD, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Luke 18:35-43 is the only other healing narrative in the synoptic gospels that closely parallels Mark 10:46-52. The following chart reveals differences and similarities:

Mark 10:46-52	Luke 18:35-43
Healing occurs near Jericho	Healing occurs near Jericho
Jesus is with his disciples	No mention of the disciples
Blind man is begging by the roadside	Blind man is begging by the roadside
Blind man is named: Bartimaeus	Blind man is unnamed
Cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"	Cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
Crowds rebuke Bartimaeus, which leads to further persistence	Crowds rebuke the blind beggar, which leads to further persistence.
Jesus asks: "What do you want me to do for you?"	Jesus asks: "What do you want me to do for you?"
Response: "Rabbi, I want to see."	Response: "Lord, I want to see."
Commended for faith and healed	Commended for faith and healed
Restoration of sight is immediate	Restoration of sight is immediate
Bartimaeus responds by following Jesus	Blind man response by following Jesus
No further mention of the crowd	Crowd responds by praising God

At first glance, the similarities between these two pericopes seems overwhelming. In fact, the similarities far outweigh the differences. The movement of the narrative plot is almost identical: Jesus approaches a particular area, the person in need calls out to Jesus, he is rebuked by the crowds in both passages. Persistence leads to an encounter with Jesus, which results in immediate healing. Both texts extol the protagonist's faith and its role in the healing of blindness. Once healing occurs, discipleship ensues.

However, upon closer inspection, there are a few differences that are worth noting. Hartstock writes that there are several assumptions that an ancient reader would make regarding blindness. Especially in contrast with Mark 8:22-26 and Luke 18:35-43, Bartimaeus shatters these assumptions in two significant ways: he exhibits independence and immediately knows who Jesus is; no one tells him.¹² It is worth noting the contrast in agency between the blind men. In Luke, the blind man is similar to the man in Mark 8:22-26, in that he is brought to Jesus by others. This is in contrast to Bartimaeus' agency in coming to Jesus on his own.

Now, this paper will examine the more immediate context of Mark 10:46-52, beginning with Mark 10:35-45:

Mark 10:35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

¹² Hartstock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts*, 183.

“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant.

These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark records several conversations between Jesus and his disciples that point to the disciples’ inability to grasp the true nature of Jesus and his mission. To put it another way: Mark continually highlights their spiritual blindness. Interestingly, this section of teaching on discipleship – 8:27-10:45 – is not only bookended by the two blind healing stories, but also by disciples misunderstanding discipleship: Peter in 8:31-33, and now James and John. Brower writes that Mark employs narrative function to a particular end; in other words, the placement of narrative elements is instructive and intentional. In relating the significance of events, Mark “uses conventional literary skills profusely to great effect. Literary techniques such as bracketing and sequence are important.”¹³ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Mark is heavily emphasizing their spiritual blindness by bracketing Jesus’ teaching on discipleship with both the healing stories and the disciples’ blindness.

In 10:32-34, Jesus has predicted his passion for the third time. Immediately following this, James and John, two of Jesus’ earliest and closest disciples, make this

¹³ Brower, *Mark*, 30.

request of Jesus: “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory (10:37).” Such a request seems startlingly selfish, given the weightiness of Jesus’ proclamation of his impending arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. According to Mark, this is yet another instance where the disciples fail to live into their discipleship; they fail to recognize that following Jesus means journeying to Jerusalem and facing persecution, and perhaps even death. Jesus even says as much, telling them “you do not know what you are asking (10:38).”

Regarding the failure of the disciples to understand Jesus, Michael J. Kok writes, the dense inquiries of the Twelve give Jesus the opportunity to illuminate the nature of his mission or meaning of discipleship, but the flaw held up for the sharpest reproach is their naked ambition, standing in stark contrast to the Son of Man who relinquished his right to be served (10:45)...Mark exposes their constant misperception as indicating that they do not possess superior insight to any other follower of Jesus...¹⁴

Kok’s point here is particularly salient, given the Bartimaeus pericope that is to follow. Using language laden with visual imagery, Kok highlights just how pointedly Mark is setting up his narrative: Jesus has attempted to “illuminate” discipleship, and, in doing so, exposes the disciples’ lack of “insight.” Mark sets up his story in such a way that the reader almost expects someone to burst upon the scene who truly understands, who possesses the necessary spiritual insight and who can actually follow Jesus to Jerusalem and join him in what awaits.

Caroline M. Kelly highlights the contrast between James and John and Bartimaeus even more explicitly when she writes,

¹⁴ Michael J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 84.

Unlike Bartimaeus, who asks Jesus to use his power to heal and restore him, James and John ask Jesus to use his power to grant them privilege. Through Bartimaeus, a seemingly-blind man, Mark opens our eyes to the real Jesus and the true meaning of discipleship. When Jesus tells the disciples to call Bartimaeus to him, he comes without hesitation, throwing off his cloak and springing to his feet to face Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asks. “Let me see again,” Bartimaeus replies. And so he does. In a real way, even before his eyes functioned properly, he still saw with far better vision than the sighted disciples.¹⁵ It is helpful to tease out what Kelly exegetes from Mark’s text: a disciple’s vision – that is, spiritual insight – is revealed in the requests made of Jesus. James and John ask for earthly status and fame; Bartimaeus asks for vision that will allow for a deeper level of discipleship. He is able to follow Jesus more fully due to miraculously-restored sight. It also seems that Bartimaeus was a disciple even before he was healed; as Kelly points out, the abandon with which he casts himself at Jesus and the trust he exhibits reveal vision that only improves with his physical healing.

Continuing in chapter 10, Healy writes that “Jesus patiently takes the occasion for another lesson in discipleship...he reveals the only way to greatness is, paradoxically, by imitating him in his humble, self-emptying love.”¹⁶ Once again, true discipleship — following Jesus with holiness of heart and life — is contrary to the disciples’ expectations. It is that person who is poor and humble in life and circumstance that becomes an ideal disciple of Jesus, a conduit through which God’s love can flow and is evidenced in service to others. As Brower writes, “it is not enough to know Jesus’ identity; confession involves wholehearted commitment.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Caroline M. Kelly, “The Blind Leading the Blind,” *Journal for Preachers*, 35 no. 4 (2012): 47. Accessed August 27, 2019, <http://www.ctsnet.edu/>.

¹⁶ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 214.

¹⁷ Brower, *Mark*, 35.

Mark 10:38-40 records a dialogue between Jesus, James, and John. It is important to unpack this conversation, because it reveals the demands of discipleship, the high costs that Bartimaeus seems willing to pay. David Schnasa Jacobsen writes that to “drink the cup” in verse 38 “points to the Hebrew Bible notion of drinking the cup of wrath or suffering (Jer. 25:19-25; Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17,22)...both images [drinking the cup and being baptized] are evocative of Jesus’ coming death and thus contrast nicely with the ‘in your glory’ expectations of James and John.”¹⁸ Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane recorded in Matthew 26:39b immediately springs to mind: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as you will.” They also serve to summarize Mark’s entire narrative thus far. Ched Meyers writes, “narratively, these serve to unify the symbolics of the story as a whole: ‘baptism’ reaches back to the beginning of the adventure (1:8ff), whereas ‘cup’ reaches ahead to the dramatic climax of the discipleship narrative, the last supper and Gethsemane (14:26, 26).”¹⁹ Taking these images together, Jesus is directly linking his ministry and his impending passion with the realities of true discipleship, and, once more, it is counter to his disciple’s assumptions.

In verse 39, the disciples answer “we can” to drinking the cup and being baptized. Such a quick, simple answer seems to further underscore their ineptitude at grasping what Jesus is really saying, and their future action proves that they were too self-confident, as

¹⁸ David Schnasa Jacobsen, *Mark: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 152-153.

¹⁹ Ched Meyers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 278.

they abandoned Jesus during his passion. And perhaps it is James and John's self-confidence and presumptuousness that causes the other ten to become indignant with them. William Hendricksen writes, "they probably felt that James and John, by asking for these positions of pre-eminence, had been plotting against *them*... This indicates that the spiritual attitude of the ten was not any better than that of the two."²⁰ This point proves true, especially when taking the rest of Mark into account: it is not just James and John who lack spiritual insight; it is the entire twelve.

This section ends with Jesus contrasting worldly power with the sort of power Jesus expects of his disciples. It is here that Jesus explicates the core of discipleship: servanthood. Contrary to the Gentiles who lord power over others, Jesus expects his disciples to become servants to all. That Jesus addresses all of the disciples with an exhortation to servanthood and not power indicates that it was not just James and John who were desirous of status and prestige. In verse 45, Jesus presents himself as an example of this new sort of leadership, saying that even he did not come to be served but to serve.

What is especially important to glean from these few verses is what Jesus has been getting at in his teaching on discipleship; here it is made explicit: "Mark uses Son of Man as a self-designation of Jesus. He represents his followers, whose lives, like his, will include suffering and cross-bearing. They share fully in his own mission."²¹ To "share

²⁰ William Hendricksen, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1975), 413.

²¹ Brower, *Mark*, 285.

fully in his own mission” means that the one who desires to follow Jesus must follow him on the way to Jerusalem, and be willing to endure all that might lie ahead.

Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Mark 10:46-52 concludes a significant section of Mark’s gospel that fully reveals the content and meaning of discipleship in light of the journey to Jerusalem. The beginning of this section, 8:22-26, was the gradual healing of an unnamed blind man. The end of the section relates the instantaneous healing of Bartimaeus. Healy writes, “Mark has framed the journey in this way to symbolize that it has been all about the healing of the disciples’ spiritual blindness.”²² The healing of Bartimaeus is the last “positive”

²² Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 216.

miracle in Mark²³; it occurs as Jesus is nearing the culmination of his ministry, his entry into Jerusalem, which is approximately twelve miles from where the healing occurs.²⁴

The setting for this miracle is Jericho. The text says that a “large crowd” was leaving the city along with Jesus and his disciples; Brower indicates that this crowd would have been pilgrims also headed to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.²⁵ As they are beginning their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Bartimaeus is begging along the roadside. In the synoptic gospels, it is uncommon to find a named character in the healing stories.

Therefore, that Bartimaeus is named could be for a few different reasons. He or his father Timaeus²⁶ could have been someone known in the ancient world. Since the text indicates that Bartimaeus followed Jesus on to Jerusalem, it is reasonable to surmise that he became a familiar follower of Jesus. It could be that there is rich symbolism in the meaning of his name. Brower write that “Son of Timaeus in Greek means *son of honor.*”²⁷ Another reason could be the connection between this Bartimaeus and Plato’s *Timaeus*.²⁸ Whatever the reason, it is clear that the naming of this man is significant in some way.

²³ The last miracle in Mark is the cursing of the fig tree in 11:12-25. It is “negative” in the sense that the fig tree is cursed and withers; it does not contain constructive, “positive” elements, such as the restoration of sight, curing of the lame, etc.

²⁴ Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 290.

²⁵ Brower, *Mark*, 288.

²⁶ Bartimaeus, bar-Timaeus, literally means “son of Timaeus.”

²⁷ Brower, *Mark*, 288.

²⁸ Some scholars see a connection between Bartimaeus and *Timaeus*, one of Plato’s dialogues that features Timaeus of Locri, c. 360 BC. This dialogue presents a teleological argument for the formation of the universe and all its components, and offers explanation into its beauty and order. While this paper will

Mark tells us that Bartimaeus is engaged in begging; this would have been his means of supporting himself, by relying on whatever the passerby might give him. His location next to the roadside is deliberate, exposing him to the greatest numbers of potential almsgivers. Further, “in contrast to the festive crowds walking along, he sits, emphasizing his social location as a disabled person.”²⁹ It is estimated that the population of Jerusalem grew from forty thousand to two hundred fifty thousand during Passover.³⁰ Therefore, sitting on the roadside while Passover pilgrims are traveling to Jerusalem could realize Bartimaeus a significant amount of money. The full import of this detail will become apparent a bit later.

The text does not indicate whether someone told Bartimaeus that Jesus was passing by or whether he overheard it from among the crowd; however, as soon as he knows that Jesus of Nazareth is near, he proclaims, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” It is very likely that Bartimaeus knew something of Jesus and his miracle-working power, because immediately, Bartimaeus exhibits faith in Jesus to mercifully heal.

Son of David is a messianic title that “literally means descendent of David, but for the Jews it had much greater meaning as the heir of God’s promises, the Messiah-King who would restore the Davidic monarchy and rule over Israel forever.”³¹ One instance of

not analyze this work, it is worth noting the potential areas of comparison and that some early hearers and readers of Mark’s Bartimaeus story may well have made connections between the two. For more on this dialogue: www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-timaeus/

²⁹ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 217.

³⁰

<http://www.jcbs.org/!userfiles/JCBS/Jerusalem%20at%20the%20Time%20of%20Jesus%20%20Final.pdf>

³¹ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 217.

the promise of a descendent from David who would rule over an everlasting kingdom is found in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14:

When your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.””

These prophetic words given to Nathan are echoed in the Jeremiah 23:5-6:

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.

This is the first time the title “Son of David” is applied to Jesus in Mark’s gospel.

It is also the first time that a Christological title is correctly applied to Jesus.³² The timing of this title is consequential; it is given to Jesus about to enter Jerusalem for celebration of the Passover. Vernon Robbins writes that Bartimaeus’ repetition of “Son of David” looks forward to Jerusalem in that it

anticipates the cry of the crowd in the third unit [third section of Mark]: ‘Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming’(11:10). Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem with the power and authority associated with David who originally captured Jerusalem and established it as the political and religious center of the nation of Israel.³³

By using Son of David in his plea for mercy as Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem, and by correctly applying this Christological title, Bartimaeus indicates that he both

³² While Peter uses the correct title in Mark 8:27-33, it is clear he does not understand the meaning and implication(s) of that title. There is no indication in the text that Bartimaeus misunderstands the meaning and implication(s) of the title Son of David.

³³ Vernon K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 42.

understands who Jesus is and what discipleship – following him on the way – means.

This provides some insight into the relationship between healing and discipleship. If Mark’s intention is to present Bartimaeus as the ideal disciple, then it follows that understanding who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish is vital for being a follower. Clearly one can follow Jesus and not fully grasp his identity or mission – see Peter, for instance. But the discipleship ideal is a confessional posture that both names and understands Jesus.

Despite the crowd’s attempt to shut him up, Bartimaeus persists in his cry, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” This plea for healing is expressed in a cry for mercy and is likely similar to how he would call out for alms from those passing him by. Juan Carlos Ossandon writes that, “by asking for mercy, Bartimaeus now only shows his poverty, but he also manifests a particular knowledge about Jesus. He believes that Jesus is merciful and powerful to help him.”³⁴ In other words, Bartimaeus believes that Jesus not only possesses the quality of mercy, but he is able to enact that mercy. That Mark records Bartimaeus’ petition twice underscores both his faith in the Son of David and his confidence in his healing mercies.

After the second petition, Jesus stops and says, regarding Bartimaeus, “call him.” Interestingly, the same crowd that had been seeking to silence Bartimaeus now becomes his cheerleader, telling him: “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you!” It is at this point that this periscope shows clear signs of being both a healing story and a call story. Verse

³⁴ Juan Carlos Ossandon, “Bartimaeus and Faith: Plot and Point of View in Mark 10,46-52,” *Biblica* 93, no. 3 (2012): 391. Accessed May 12, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42615120>

50 recalls how Bartimaeus, just like Jesus' earlier disciples, abandon all to follow Jesus.

Bartimaeus casts aside his cloak, which is quite significant. "A blind man, throwing his cloak aside into the darkness, does not expect to return from his encounter with Jesus blind or to return to his old life as a beggar."³⁵ Marten J. J. Menken makes clear the import of this action:

According to Exodus 22:25-26 and Deuteronomy 24:12-13, the most essential possession of a poor person (and a beggar would undoubtedly be poor) is his cloak. It is his only shelter, and if it is taken in a pledge, it must be returned before evening. For an oriental beggar, moreover, his cloak is the 'instrument' with which he performs his duty: he puts it down on the road in hope that passers-by will deposit their gifts on it...Mark 10:50a is not concerned with picturesque detail, but with an essential element of a call story: the abandonment of the occupation and possessions of the person who has been called.³⁶

Menken's analysis here begins to convey the enormity of this action, and the strong degree to which Bartimaeus exercised faith in the healing mercies of the Son of David. Bartimaeus' cloak is everything: his means of shelter, his mode of sustenance, his very identity, and yet he is willing to lose it all. As Bartimaeus flings it aside to respond to Jesus' call, the reader cannot help but think of the first disciples Jesus called as he walked along the Sea of Galilee, those fishermen who left it all behind to follow him.

Healy takes it even further and reads baptismal nuances into this action: "to cast off his cloak symbolizes leaving behind his former life, as Christians are called to put off the old nature at baptism and throughout their life."³⁷ Most Christian traditions

³⁵ Brower, *Mark*, 289.

³⁶ Marten J J Menken, "The Call of Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52), *HTS* 61, no. 1&2 (2005): 275. Accessed April 5, 2018, <https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/442>.

³⁷ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 218.

understand the sacrament of baptism as an initiation into discipleship. This reading takes the implications of discipleship even further, in that when Jesus calls, one must be ready to not only abandon not only one's social location and means of support, but one must be willing to completely do away with one's former life, relying wholly on the mercies of Jesus, and step into a new identity.

When Bartimaeus comes to Jesus, Jesus asks him, "what do you want me to do for you?" Interestingly, this is the same question Jesus asked James and John in Mark 10:36, further highlighting the differences between them and Bartimaeus in grasping the meaning of discipleship. Healy writes that "unlike the sons of Zebedee, Bartimaeus does not ask for any special honor for himself, but only the restoration to wholeness that is part of God's messianic promise."³⁸ Bartimaeus simply wants to see again. He asks for no status, recognition, wealth, or fame, but simply for the restoration of what he once possessed. Here the confessional cry of Son of David comes into focus, for it seems that from the beginning of the encounter, Bartimaeus knows exactly what Messiah can do. The Messiah can heal, and Bartimaeus is ready to give all for a taste of that healing mercy and is ready to follow Jesus along the way.

Jacobsen writes that, when Bartimaeus uses the title Rabbi to refer to Jesus, "even here discipleship is really in view. For teaching here is not always about content; it is also about illumination on the way."³⁹ Bartimaeus is already placing himself in the proper position: a willingness to follow along the way under the teaching of Jesus. On a

³⁸ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 219.

³⁹ Jacobsen, *Mark*, 157.

symbolic level, in keeping with this pericope's commentary on the disciples' spiritual blindness, "the language is of encouragement to disciples whose eyes have been blinded in that they can be restored to full sight."⁴⁰ Bestowing the gift of sight – whether the restoration of physical sight or the gift of spiritual vision that leads to discipleship – is all within the purview of the Messiah.

"Go, your faith has healed you," is Jesus' response to Bartimaeus' request. It is an interesting response, in that we do not witness the act of Bartimaeus receiving his sight. Jesus does not lay his hands upon him or lather him with spittle and mud. Jesus speaks to Bartimaeus' faith to bring his own healing. However, Mark records that "immediately he received his sight." Commenting on what he perceives as the strange ending of this passage, Ossandon states the following: "it is quite reasonable to conclude that the theme of the episode consists mainly in the revelation of Bartimaeus' faith, rather than in the healing of his blindness."⁴¹ However, this conclusion does not seem to hold up when more closely examining the passage and understanding it in light of the larger Markan narrative. Yes, Bartimaeus' faith is absolutely central to this pericope; however, what Ossandon seems to overlook is the object of Bartimaeus' faith. He does not exhibit faith for its own sake; he has faith in the Son of David, the Messiah, to bestow healing mercies. Bartimaeus' faith and the miraculous healing of his blindness are inseparable.

Mary Healy remarks that

Bartimaeus' sight was restored, but even more, the eyes of his heart were enlightened. He demonstrated the perfect response to a healing: he followed Jesus *on the way*, the way of discipleship, a whole new life of following the Master

⁴⁰ Brower, *Mark*, 290.

⁴¹ Ossandon, "Bartimaeus and Faith," 390.

wherever he leads. Bartimaeus' healing is an image of what happens to every Christian at conversion and baptism: our hearts are enlightened and through faith we are enabled to truly "see" what is invisible... We begin to understand realities of the kingdom that we could not understand before, and we gladly set out with Jesus on the way – the way that sometimes leads to the cross, but ultimately to the Resurrection.⁴²

The implication of this healing story is clear: healing leads to discipleship, as healed individuals gain a heretofore unavailable degree of spiritual insight. Through the story of Bartimaeus, disciples are able to place their own story within it, and experience more deeply the call to discipleship through the healing grace of Jesus.

Brower states that Bartimaeus "offers hope to failed disciples then and now. Sight can be regained. They [the disciples] can be restored and can follow on the way to the cross."⁴³ "He demonstrates the perfect response to being healed: he follows Jesus on the way of discipleship, the way through Jesus' passion and death to the resurrection and eternal life."⁴⁴ Through his example, Mark shows that the ideal disciple is one who confesses and understands who Jesus the Messiah is. The disciple believes in the power of Jesus to heal, and that such healing power is activated and operates through the faith of the recipient. That disciple who has thrown himself on the mercies of Jesus, has experienced healing, and, as a result of that powerful encounter with the healing mercies of the Messiah, endeavors to follow Jesus along the road. N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird agree when they write that Bartimaeus joins Jesus "in the way" – 'the way' being a regular early Christian designation of the movement. The blind man who sees and

⁴² Healy, Mary, *Healing: Bringing the Gift of God's Mercy to the World* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2015), 159.

⁴³ Brower, *Mark*, 290.

⁴⁴ Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 218.

follows is Mark's model of true discipleship."⁴⁵ Both healing and discipleship are inextricably linked: healing should lead to deeper and greater discipleship, and discipleship should be concerned with the ministry of healing.

Conclusion

The story of Blind Bartimaeus is one of the most instructive healing stories in the canonical Gospels, for it offers an instructive link between healing and discipleship. When comparing Mark 10:46-52 with the other healing story in Mark 8:22-26 and its counterpart in Luke 18:35-43, and when situating it within the larger Markan context, the reader is presented with a full view of Jesus' mission, the content of which Jesus himself proclaimed: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for prisoners, and *recovery of sight for the blind*, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (emphasis added)."⁴⁶

Mark reveals a Messiah who is looking for disciples who are not eager to pursue their own interests, who will risk everything for a taste of Jesus' healing mercies, and who will journey with him on "the way," a way that leads to the cross. Mark also reveals a gracious Messiah who does not give up on spiritually blind disciples but presents them with numerous opportunities to (re)gain spiritual sight. In just a few short verses,

⁴⁵ Wright, N.T. and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in its World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 568.

⁴⁶ Luke 4:18-19, quoting Isaiah 61:1-2.

Bartimaeus provides each of us a model for being a Jesus-follower. Disciples should also minister in healing, by bringing the good news of the Kingdom to the last and the least.

These foundational principles will guide my project. As I gather other United Methodist clergy and implement a discipleship program that seeks to integrate Wesleyanism with ministering in healing, I will be using evaluative questions that proceed from this exegetical work on Mark 10:46-52. First, are these disciples willing to adopt a lifestyle of service as an integral component of discipleship? Secondly, are they willing to be a risk-taking follower? Thirdly, do they understand healing as a core component of Jesus' ministry, and therefore of his disciples, and do they want to minister in healing? Fourthly, do they understand healing as not merely a siloed, periodic exercise but something that permeates all of Christian ministry? With these biblical foundations shaping my own practice of discipleship, I will seek to implement, evaluate, and encourage them in the members of my context.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The Methodist movement begun by John Wesley in the 18th century became the forebearer of the modern Holiness and subsequent Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, and has led to the development of numerous denominations. The Methodist movement and its ecclesial offspring have hundreds of millions of adherents worldwide and have birthed some of the greatest revivals in history. In fact, according to the Pew Research Forum, the fastest growing Christian traditions worldwide are within this religious camp.¹

The effects of Methodism and its descendants on the world cannot be overstated.

From its inception as a renewal movement within the Church of England, Methodism has contained within itself the DNA of the divine healing movement in its various iterations. Moving within the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and expecting, through prayer, for God to intervene in the affairs of the created order—both indispensable to the theology of healing – were strands woven through all these movements, and, according to John Wesley, were two of the chief marks of Methodism from the beginning:

“A Methodist is one who ‘the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him’...it is given him ‘always to pray, and not to faint’...But at

¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-movements-and-denominations/>, accessed July 16, 2018.

all times the language of his heart is this: ‘Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my mouth, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee. And this is true prayer, the lifting up the heart to God. This is the essence of prayer, and this alone. His heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times, and in all places.²

This paper will sketch the history, understanding, and practice of healing in the early Methodist movement, particularly in the works of John and Charles Wesley. The first section of this paper will offer a brief sketch of the foundations of healing within John Wesley’s works as a way of understanding how the early Methodists would have been instructed in healing. This is necessary for developing a lens through which to understand numerous primary Wesleyan texts. The paper will then examine some of these primary texts such as letters, tracts, sermons, and hymns – important influential texts in early Methodism – that offer insight into how John Wesley and his brother, well-known hymn writer Charles Wesley, conceived of healing. The aim of this paper is to develop the thesis that early Methodists conceived of healing as a normal part of the Christian life and that it was an integral part of the Methodist structure and practice; that it was inseparable from larger theological themes such as grace and salvation; and that John Wesley conceived of this practice of praying for God to heal both body and soul as normative for Wesleyan Christians today.

Foundations of Healing in Early Methodism

John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder and principal architect of the Methodist movement, was a well-educated, ordained priest in the Church of England. According to

² Rupert E. Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Methodist Societies*, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 35, 37.

Richard Heitzenrater, John and his brother Charles, along with a few others at Oxford, began a methodical attempt at pursuing a holy life, and this is where Heitzenrater says the seeds of Methodism began to germinate:

This little band of friends, encouraged by the presence of John, occasionally met together for study, prayer, and religious conversation, attended the Sacrament regularly, and kept track of their lives by daily notations in a diary. These fairly innocuous activities represent the first manifestations of what would become Oxford Methodism.³

Therefore, from its beginnings, Methodism centered on a deliberate, disciplined approach to Christian living, utilizing what Wesley would eventually call the “means of grace” – prayer, Scripture, fasting, Christian conversation – “all designed to promote ‘holiness of heart and life.’”⁴ Influenced by such writers as William Law, Jeremy Taylor, and Thomas a Kempis, Wesley’s emphasis on holiness became the focal point of Methodist activity. In a sermon preached at St. Mary’s, Oxford, on January 1, 1733, Wesley laid out his understanding of holiness. Focusing on Romans 2:29 in which St. Paul writes of the “circumcision of the heart,” Wesley understood this to mean

that habitual disposition of soul which in the Sacred Writings is termed ‘holiness,’ and which directly implies that being cleansed from sin, ‘from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit,’ and by consequence the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus, the being so ‘renewed in the image of our mind’ as to be ‘perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.’⁵

This particular portion from the beginning of Wesley’s sermon is essential, for here he laid out several key themes which aid in situating healing within an early

³ Richard P. Heitzenrater., *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 38.

⁴ Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 43.

⁵ Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 25.

Methodist framework. In this text, Wesley linked several theological concepts to salvation: holiness, renewal, and perfection. He understood salvation as the renewal and restoration of the image of God, which can then allow for the pursuit of holiness; all this is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit:

without the Spirit of God we can do nothing but add sin to sin; that is he alone ‘which worketh in us’ by his almighty power, either ‘to will or do’ what is good – it being impossible for us even to think a good thought without the supernatural assistance of the Spirit as to create ourselves, or to renew our whole souls in righteous and true holiness.⁶

It is important to understand Wesley’s soteriology as restoration of the image of God. In this way, Wesley was much closer to the Eastern church with his therapeutic understanding of salvation, a “truly holistic salvation, where God’s forgiveness of sins is interwoven with God’s gracious healing of the damages that sin has wrought.”⁷ Maddox proposes that for Wesley, part of those damages caused by sin was physical affliction, and it was God’s intention to heal both. Theodore Runyon develops this theme further when he writes

In Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace he makes clear, on the one hand, the impossibility of fallen humanity saving itself apart from the action of the re-creative spirit, and, on the other hand, his conviction that God does indeed intervene in the human situation to open up new possibilities for us.⁸

For Wesley, healing of the body and the soul is contained in the “new possibilities” God’s grace opens up for humanity. And it is always grace, whether it is

⁶ Outler and Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, 25.

⁷ Randy L. Maddox, “John Wesley on Holistic Health and Healing.” *Methodist History* 46, no. 1 (2007): 4-33. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁸ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 23-24.

healing of the body or the soul, and, given that Wesley often used healing language in reference to both the physical body and the spiritual person, he understood that both often accompanied each other.

Consider this portion from an early John Wesley sermon “The Image of God,” delivered at St. Mary’s church at Oxford in November 1730:

Who indeed shall recover us from the body of this death? Who shall restore our native immortality? We answer with the Apostle, ‘I thank God, Jesus Christ our Lord!’ ‘As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive’ – all who accept of the means which he hath prepared, who walk by the rules which he hath given them. All these shall by dying conquer the first death, and shall never taste of the second. The seeds of spiritual death they shall gradually expel, before this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, that this too, when it has been taken down and thoroughly purged, may be rebuilt ‘eternal in the heavens.’⁹

It is with this paradigm in place – that John Wesley understood divine healing as part of the soteriological initiative – that this paper will turn to a survey of several early Methodist primary texts that speak to divine healing. These texts, whether sermons, hymns, poems, or other writings, will be examined for how early Methodism understood divine healing, the Wesleyan theological underpinnings for healing, and how healing was understood in practice.

A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week

The first tract that John Wesley wrote was *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*, published in 1738. This treatise provides insight into how Wesley desired early Methodists to pray; that he designed forms of prayer for every day of the week indicates the frequency and seriousness with which he desired his followers to pray.

⁹ Outler and Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, 19.

Several of his prayers are instructive for examining Wesley's holistic understanding of health and healing. Consider this prayer for Sunday morning:

We are ashamed, O Lord, to think that ever we have disobeyed thee, who hast redeemed us by the precious blood of thine own Son. O that we may agree with thy will in all things for the time to come; and that all the powers of our souls and bodies may be wholly dedicated to thy service.¹⁰

Implied in this prayer is a connection between bodily health and one's relationship with God. The necessity of repentance and subsequent obedience to God's directives allows for one's physical body to be used in service to God. This is in keeping with Wesley's understanding that the spiritual condition affects the physical body, and that turning from sin and toward a life of holiness reaps both spiritual and physical benefits.

Here is a prayer for Thursday morning:

O Lord Jesus, I give thee my body, my soul, my substance, my fame, my friends, my liberty, my life: Dispose of me, and all that is mine, as it seemeth best unto thee. I am not mine, but thine; Claim me as thy right, keep me as thy charge, love me as thy child! Fight for me when I am assaulted, heal me when I am wounded, and revive me when I am destroyed.¹¹

This short prayer reveals another aspect of how Wesley conceived of health: total surrender.¹² In other words, for one have access to the healing grace of God meant entire self over to God, including one's own physical body. It is within that context of surrender that Wesley believed God would honor the prayers for healing. Once again, this prayer

¹⁰ John Wesley, *A Collection of Prayers for Every Day of the Week*, https://truth4freedom.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/wes_ww11.pdf, accessed July 17, 2018.

¹¹ John Wesley, *A Collection of Prayers for Every Day of the Week*, https://truth4freedom.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/wes_ww11.pdf, accessed July 17, 2018.

¹² The contents of this prayer are echoed later in Wesley's well-known Wesleyan Covenant Service which was first used in 1755.

reveals Wesley's holistic understanding of health: when the believer turns everything over to God's care, that permits one to turn to God in prayer for every need – physical, spiritual, or otherwise.

Primitive Physick

In 1747, Wesley anonymously published the pamphlet *Primitive Physick, or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*. This treatise became so popular that it went through twenty-three additions in Wesley's lifetime and remained in circulation until the 1880s.¹³ While he never received any formal medical training, Wesley was well-versed in a variety of treatments; in fact, to have some knowledge of basic medical care would have been common for an Anglican clergyman of his day.¹⁴ Wesley's view of praying for healing was influenced by both *The Book of Common Prayer* and "Ministration to the Sick," published in 1549 by Thomas Cranmer; both instructed Anglican clergy on how to offer prayers for the sick in their churches.¹⁵ Therefore, Wesley seamlessly blended both natural remedies and medical practices (which he believed were God-given) of his day with divine prescriptions, "and perceived their joint

¹³ Randy L. Maddox, "John Wesley on Holistic Health and Healing." *Methodist History* 46, no. 1 (2007): 4-33. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 29, 2018).

¹⁴ R. Jeffrey Hiatt, "John Wesley and Healing: Developing a Wesleyan Missiology." *The Asbury Theological Journal* 59, nos. 1&2 (2004): 89-109. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 29, 2018).

¹⁵ R. Jeffrey Hiatt, "John Wesley and Healing: Developing a Wesleyan Missiology." *The Asbury Theological Journal* 59, nos. 1&2 (2004): 89-109. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 29, 2018).

role in the restoration of the individual to health and wholeness.”¹⁶ Of this text, Robert Webster writes

The little book which became popular for Methodist piety and practice was interesting not only for the selection of remedies and cures that could be acquired and administered by almost anyone but also for the ways in which Wesley intermingled natural and supernatural categories and perceived their joint roles in the restoration of the individual to health and wholeness.¹⁷

At the beginning of *Primitive Physick*, in a section containing instructions on how to administer the remedies he sets forth, Wesley concluded with this directive: “Above all, add to the rest, (for it is not labour lost) that old unfashionable medicine, prayer. And have faith in God who “killeth and maketh alive, who bringeth down to the grace, and bringeth up.”¹⁸ Three things are of note here: first, while advocating a combination of both natural and supernatural elements, Wesley clearly understood prayer as being the most necessary part – notice the words “above all.” Secondly, it is prayer offered in faith. It is prayer that trusts in the ability of the Great Physician to restore physical health. Thirdly, as Webster writes, “sometimes prayer served alongside natural remedies in the process of healing but at other times Wesley viewed prayer as sufficient medicine in itself.”¹⁹ Given the above mentioned document that Wesley had written admonishing daily prayer, it is clear that early Methodists were formed in a pattern of regular, daily

¹⁶ Robert Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley’s Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Methodists in the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2013), 171.

¹⁷ Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous*, 171.

¹⁸ John Wesley, *Primitive Physick, or An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*. <https://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/The-Wesleys-and-Their-Times/Primitive-Physick>, accessed July 16, 2018.

¹⁹ Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous*, 178.

prayer; it is safe to assume that these believers would have naturally turned to prayer to access divine healing. It is with this context in mind that one should read all of the natural remedies prescribed in the rest of this treatise.

John Wesley's Journals

John Wesley was a prolific writer with strong attention to detail. His journals give us tremendous insight into early Methodism, and they also contain numerous instances of examples of healing. This portion of the paper will focus on several entries that pertain to healing experiences.

The first entry to examine is from Friday, May 8 and Sunday, May 10, 1741. In the entry from Thursday, May 7, Wesley recorded instructions he had given to other Methodists on caring for the poor and sick, including a detailed schedule of visitation to the sick. After that entry, he writes

I found myself much out of order. However I made shift to preach in the evening. But on Saturday my bodily strength quite failed, so that for several hours I could scarce lift up my head. Sun. 10. I was obliged to lie down most part of the day, being easy only in that posture. Yet in the evening my weakness was suspended while I was calling sinners to repentance. But at our love-feast which followed, beside the pain in my back and head, and the fever which still continued upon me, just as I began to pray I was seized with such a cough that I could hardly speak. At the same time came strongly into my mind, 'These signs shall follow them that believe...' I called on Jesus aloud to 'increase my faith,' and to 'confirm the word of his grace.' While I was speaking my pain vanished away. The fever left me. My bodily strength returned. And for many weeks I felt neither weakness nor pain. 'Unto thee, O Lord, do I give thanks.'²⁰

²⁰ Rupert E. Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Journals and Diaries II (1738-1743)*, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 194.

In this example, Wesley utilized prayer for his own physical healing. It is interesting to note that while preaching, he seemed to experience relief. After being reminded of Mark 16:17, in which Jesus gives final instructions to the disciples, Wesley called out for two specific things: an increase in faith, and a confirmation of “the word of his grace,” understood to be the Gospel message itself. The symptoms dissipated, and Wesley gave thanks to God for his healing.

The two points which Wesley pleads regarding his healing – an increase in faith and confirmation of the gospel – provide some of the most solid historical evidence yet that Wesley conceived of healing in relation to a particular degree of faith and that it served as validation of the gospel message. This is especially important when tracing some of the faith and divine healing movements of the 19th and 20th centuries that sprung from Methodism, for it confirms that the theological foundations of those movements were indeed present in Wesley’s life and ministry.

Here is John Wesley’s journal entry from November 19, 1741:

About noon the next day I went out in a coach as far as the school in Kingswood; where one of the mistresses lay (as was believed) near death, having found no help from all the medicines she had taken. We determined to try one remedy more. So we poured out our souls in prayer to God. From that hour she began to recover strength, and in a few days was out of danger.²¹

It seems that Wesley had gone out to visit one of the staff at the school in Kingswood, which would eventually be built and established as a Methodist institution in 1748. This journal entry reveals most clearly that Wesley understood prayer as a

²¹ Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Journals and Diaries II (1738-1743)*, 239.

medicinal “remedy,” and, taken in concert with the primary sources mentioned above, not over and against medicine of the time, but in conjunction with it.

While John Wesley rarely addressed healing of mental illness or “deep-level healing” (a few tips are given in *Primitive Physick*), his journal entry from June 17, 1742 offers a glimpse into how Wesley may have approached this sort of healing. In the entry just prior to this, Wesley recounted how God’s blessing had poured down on a gathering to such an extent that he had to cease preaching, for “our hearts were so filled with a sense of the love of God, and our mouths with prayer and thanksgiving.”²² That same evening,

The same blessing from God we found in the evening, while I was showing how he justifies the ungodly. Among the hearers was one who some time before had been deeply convinced of her ungodliness; insomuch that she cried out day and night, ‘Lord save, or I will perish.’ All the neighbors agreeing that she was stark mad, her husband put her into a physician’s hands, who bled her largely, gave her a strong vomit, and laid out several blisters. But all this proving without success, she was in a short time judged to be incurable. He thought however he would speak to one person more, who had done much good in the neighborhood. When Mrs. Johnson came, she soon saw the nature of the disease, having herself gone through the same. She ordered all the medicines to be thrown away and exhorted the patient to ‘look unto Jesus,’ which this evening she was enabled to do by faith. And he healed the broken in heart.²³

Once again, prayerful faith in Jesus to heal became the remedy when all other medicinal treatments failed, and faith was the enabling agent that allowed her to pray.

²² Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Journals and Diaries II (1738-1743)*, 279.

²³ Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Journals and Diaries II (1738-1743)*, 279.

A Letter to the Right Reverend, the Lord Bishop of Gloucester

In this responsive letter to a tract written by William Warburton, the bishop of Gloucester, John Wesley set forth his understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit and responded to the criticism that Methodists were “enthusiasts.”²⁴ One of the points on which Warburton attacked Wesley was his belief that the gifts of the Spirit persisted into the present era, taking issue with the “signs and wonders associated with his mission [and] his gifts of healing and exorcism.”²⁵ In Wesley’s usual generosity of spirit, he undertook a lengthy response to Warburton’s publication. Analyzing portions of this letter will be beneficial in revealing further nuance to Wesley’s understanding of healing: first, that sickness can be the work of the Devil, and secondly, that he was a continuationist, not a cessationist.²⁶

At the outset, Wesley relayed several instances of demonic manifestations that were broken by the power of God; in response to these examples, Wesley wrote

I found more and more undeniable proofs that we need to watch and pray every moment...I believe the devil still variously tempts and troubles good men, while he ‘works with energy in the children of disobedience’... ‘these symptoms I can no more impute to any natural cause than to the Spirit of God. I make no doubt it was Satan tearing them as they were coming to Christ’... ‘these symptoms’ are cries, and bodily pain. The very next instance makes this plain: ‘I visited a poor old woman. Her trials had been uncommon – inexpressible agonies of mind,

²⁴ This was a common charge against Methodists; it was levied toward those who claimed to be “spirit-filled” and who operated in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wesley famously called himself a “reasonable enthusiast.”

²⁵ Cragg, Gerald R., ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 462.

²⁶ Continuationists believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operational today; cessationists believe many of them have ceased. In this letter to the Bishop of Gloucester, Wesley explicitly rejected the assertion that the gifts ceased at the end of the apostolic age.

joined with all sorts of bodily pain; not, it seemed, from any natural cause, but the direct operation of Satan.²⁷

This segment reveals that Wesley understood the work of Satan might cause physical and deep-level manifestations, and, as he claimed at the outset, prayer would be the best tool to employ against the Devil's works. Taken with many of the previous sources examined, it is reasonable to conclude that Wesley did not see the Devil as the source behind every physical or deep-level torment, but he did see it as possibility, and prescribed appropriate treatment. It is also worth noting that Wesley seemed to view the Devil's attacks as most pernicious against new Christians, or against people at a moment of decision for Christ.

Toward the beginning of the letter, after recounting several examples of physical healing among people to whom Wesley had either directly or indirectly ministered, he wrote: "Others may account for this by natural causes. I believe this is the power of God. But what does this all prove? Not that I claim any gift above other men; but only that I believe God now hears and answers prayer, even beyond the ordinary course of nature."²⁸ Wesley refused to claim special ability, which was one of the criticisms levied by Warburton; instead, he pointed to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit operating supernaturally in the created order, and that healing may be accessed through prayer.

²⁷ Cragg, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 470-471.

²⁸ Cragg, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, vol. 11, 474.

Charles Wesley's Hymns

This final section will center on Charles Wesley's hymnody, and will mine this treasure trove for themes of divine healing.

Charles Wesley, equally important in Methodism's founding as his brother John, was also ordained in the Church of England. In addition to being a stirring preacher and prolific writer, his most significant and well-loved contribution to the Methodist movement was his poetry and hymnody. During his life, he wrote over 6,000 hymns, many of which are still today in churches of all denominations. Many of his hymns contain references to healing or present a theology that supported the understanding of healing and prayer explicated above.

One of Charles Wesley's best-known hymns is one most often sung during the Christmas season: "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Consider the words of the third and final stanza:

Hail the heavenly Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all he brings,
 Risen with healing in his wings.
 Mild he lays his glory by,
 Born that man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.²⁹

Notice the language of health contained in this stanza: life, healing, "no more may die." This language is typically Wesleyan, in that the distinction between physical and spiritual health is blurred and taken together. The reference to Malachi 4:2 also presents

²⁹ *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 240.

healing in an eschatological light, referencing the work of Christ that will one day result in no more death or sickness.

The Wesley brothers believed that healing was available through the Eucharist. Through this sacrament, God's healing grace could be realized in the lives of those who partook. Although not significantly fleshed out like it would be in later movements, to some extent, John and Charles Wesley understood healing to be one of the benefits of the atonement. Webster writes

The atoning sacrifice of the crucified Christ incorporated the believer into God's power which had cancelled sin. The Eucharist, then, demonstrated for [John and Charles] Wesley a bridge between the life of Christ in its human dimensions and a reality that lay beyond the finitude of human limitations. It was not uncommon in Methodist narratives during the period for communicants receiving the host to have visions of the crucified Savior and to experience the healing efficacy of the wounds of Christ.³⁰

With this in mind, consider the words of stanzas 4, 8, and 11 to one of Charles Wesley's communion hymns, "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast":

Do not begin to make excuse,
Ah! Do not you his grace refuse;
Your worldly cares and pleasures leave,
And take what Jesus hath to give.

Excus'd, alas! Why should ye be
From health, and life, and liberty,
From entring into glorious rest,
From leaning on your Saviour's breast.

Come then ye souls, by sin opprest,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maim'd, and halt, and blind,
In Christ an hearty welcome find.³¹

³⁰ Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous*, 182.

³¹ *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 339.

This hymn provides a rich view of healing offered in the Lord’s Supper. As in other examples, the language moves seamlessly between physical and spiritual healing, further confirming that the Wesley brothers did not separate the two. Healing is communicated through God’s grace, and rest and relief from physical ailment is offered in Christ.

The final hymn to consider is a little-known one, but it offers the most substantive, explicit treatment of healing than any other Charles Wesley hymn. Published in 1748, this hymn was offered “for one that is sick”:

Hail, great Physician of Mankind!
Jesus Thou art from Every Ill,
Health in Thine only Name we find;
Thy Name doth in the Medicine heal.

Thy Name the fainting Soul restores,
Strength to the languid Body brings,
Renews exhausted Nature’s Powers,
And bears us as on Eagle’s Wings.

Faith in Thy Sovereign Name I have,
And wait its healing Power to know,
Assured, that It my Flesh shall save,
Till all thy Work is done below.

Then, Saviour, for my Spirit call,
My Spirit all-conformed to Thine,
And let This Tabernacle fall,
To rise rebuilt by Hands Divine.³²

In this hymn, almost all of the above healing themes come together: faith, prayer, salvation, eschatology. “Thy name doth in the medicine heal” seems to reinforce John

³² *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley: Reprinted From the Originals, With the Last Corrections of the Authors; Together With the Poems of Charles Wesley, Not Before Published*, vol. 5, coll. and arr. by G. Osborn (London: Wesley-Methodist Conference Office, 1869), 65. Accessed March 3, 2018, <https://archive.org/details/poeticalworksjo03weslgoog/page/n4>

Wesley's thesis that even medicinal remedies have their source in God's divine grace.

The reference to Isaiah 40 alludes to divine restoration of the physically weak and powerless, and Charles Wesley expresses confidence that healing is contained within God's sovereign plan.

Conclusion

This paper has examined healing in early Methodism by analyzing important primary texts of the movement: John Wesley's sermons, prayers, publications, journal entries, letters, and Charles Wesley's hymnody. In examining these sources, it is clear that healing was an integral part of the first generation of Methodism, and that the Wesley brothers conceived of healing as a normative practice for their people. It is particularly noteworthy that healing was understood to occur through a variety of methods; in other words, God could use medicine, Scripture reading, sacraments, or heal in direct response to particular forms of prayer. John and Charles Wesley weaved healing into their preaching, singing, pastoral care, and other forms of communication, and intended it to pass this passion for healing ministry on to later generations of Methodists.

My project is to reclaim healing as an essential component of Methodist practice, something integral to the Wesleyan *via salutis* and to the entirety of one's ministry. Within the context of my ministry, I will seek to teach and train other United Methodist pastors in the ministry of healing – how to pray for and minister deep-level healing, the healing of emotional and spiritual hurts. For many Christians in the Wesleyan stream – not just in my immediate context but across the denomination – healing is misunderstood,

if even acknowledged at all. Many faithful Wesleyan believers do not even think about healing, much less believe it is a normative practice for today. By placing this teaching and training within an historical Wesleyan framework, and to show that healing has been part of the Methodist movement from its inception, will allow these United Methodist clergy to rightfully claim the healing ministry as their own. To that end, the next chapter will center on early Methodist texts, such as John Wesley's letters, journals, and *Primitive Physick*, and Charles Wesley's hymnody, to examine what the founders of the movement believed about healing.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter focused how early Methodism understood healing and integrated healing into the movement. However, as Methodism became institutionalized and more staid, an emphasis on God's divine activity in healing decreased. Yet the twentieth century saw a renewal of healing among Christian traditions, particularly with the rise and explosive growth of Methodism's cousin, the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. This has not been limited to churches just in the Pentecostal or charismatic traditions; with the Second Wave¹ of the charismatic movement that began in the 1960s, this emphasis on healing spread into mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Healing prayer, healing services and liturgies, healing seminars and trainings – all of these are common in numerous Christian traditions today. While the Church had never completely lost an understanding and practice of healing, as Eddie Hyatt shows in *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, the previous century saw an unprecedented and widespread recovery of healing.

¹ According to Henry Lederle in his book *Theology With Spirit*, the Second Wave of the Charismatic movement refers to the renewal that took hold in denominations in the 1960s, including churches in both mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions.

With this renewed emphasis on healing across Christian traditions came theological disagreement on the nature and/or practice of healing, many of which continue to persist in large segments of the church. In several denominations, the liberal tradition, with its skepticism of the miraculous, has often perpetuated a theology of healing that doubts and even denies that God miraculously heals today. Others who hold to cessationism² may posit that God did work supernaturally in Biblical times, and that the gift of healing was pertinent then, but is not legitimate for believers today. Still others within the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition have advocated a theology of healing that is errant, in violation of other cardinal doctrines of the church. Therefore, there is a need for a faithful, balanced treatment of healing: what Biblical and theological scholarship teaches regarding healing, and how healing should be understood and practiced today.

It is the thesis of this paper that a Christian understanding of healing should take an integrative approach: it should not separate healing from other Biblical doctrines and practices, but should instead develop a theology and practice that seeks to integrate healing within the entire theological enterprise and therefore within the entire person, looking to the activity of the Holy Spirit within the life of the believer and the church. John Wesley's teaching on the *imago Dei*, the image of God, offers both a corrective to a poor theology of healing and a holistic paradigm through which to approach healing. That belief will undergird the doctoral project and is therefore worthy of exploration here. In addition, any approach to healing should explore several doctrinal frameworks,

² Very simply, this theological position holds that many or most of the gifts of the Holy Spirit elucidated in 1 Corinthians 12 have ended, either with the death of the first apostles, at the close of the Biblical canon, or at some other time early in church history.

but most especially should center on God's grace and His activity in the world.

Therefore, this paper will explore a theology of healing that frames this doctrine within the Wesleyan theological tradition; therefore, specific attention will be given to how healing is understood within the key Wesleyan theme of the image of God and how God's grace restores this image to its intended nature and expression. Wesley advanced the notion that God's grace restores the once marred image of God in the individual and the resulting restoration has significant relational affects. Restoration of relationships is a significant way to approach healing and will be unpacked in this paper.

Following that, consideration will then be given to the relationship between this Wesleyan emphasis and the following doctrines: pneumatology and ecclesiology. This paper will give significant attention to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, his nature and activity in the world especially as it relates to healing, and the role of the church, the *ecclesia*, as the body through which healing should be taught, practiced, and realized. Finally, this paper will integrate the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the church within the Wesleyan framework of the image of God developed at the outset, particularly looking at how the Holy Spirit might work through the church in the ministry of restoring and healing the image of God within the individual.

At the outset, it is only right to set forth a few guiding principles that will direct the author's work. This paper operates with the belief that Biblical theology is primary, and that the Bible is the believer's ultimate authority. In his book *Truth Aflame*, Larry Hart writes that "theology is meant to help believers better understand and obey the

Scriptures.”³ Therefore, it is a fundamental guiding principle that theology is always informed by Biblical texts, and theology’s primary purpose is to aid in deeper Christian devotion to God and others. In addition to a Wesleyan framework, this paper also approaches healing from a charismatic theological perspective. This is important, in that several theological positions are assumed at the outset: that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for believers today, that the Holy Spirit still comes upon people in power and might that they might love God and neighbor more fully. All of this is fundamental in understanding the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in how the image of God is restored and healed in the individual.

Wesleyan Grace and the *Imago Dei*

Randy Maddox wrote that “Wesley’s most fundamental conviction about human life was that we are created and dependent beings. Our very existence and all our faculties are gifts of God’s grace.”⁴ In his sermon entitled “The New Birth,” John Wesley spoke of three aspects of the image of God: the natural, the political, and the moral. For Wesley, the natural image centered on the affections and the living of humanity, the political image concerned itself with the humanity’s dominion over creation as elucidated in Genesis 1:26-28, and the moral image dealt with those divine attributes bestowed upon humanity, such as love, justice, holiness, and righteousness. While it would be improper

³ Larry Hart, *Truth Aflame: Theology for the Church in Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 17.

⁴ Maddox, Randy, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994), 67.

to separate these aspects completely one from the other, it is clear from this sermon that Wesley understood the moral image as being what truly constituted humanity being in the image of God:

“And God,” the three-one God, “said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him”...chiefly in his moral image, which, according to the Apostle, is “righteousness and true holiness.” In this image of God was man made. “God is love”: accordingly man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of the Creator. God is spotless purity: and so man was in the beginning pure from every simple blot. Otherwise God could not have pronounced him as well as all the other works of his hands, “very good.”⁵

It is clear that John Wesley viewed the moral image as foundational to understanding both humanity and the image of the God in which they were created. Scott Jones makes this observation about the sermon “The New Birth”:

For Wesley, the most important way in which creation in the image of God should be understood concerns the moral image...in short, the doctrines of sanctification, Christian perfection, personal holiness, and social justice all have to do with the renewal of this moral image of God. This is the first piece in United Methodist understanding of God’s saving grace. Creation is by God, and human beings are created in God’s image, especially like God’s reigning attribute, love.⁶

As Jones correctly points out, a variety of core Christian beliefs hinge upon the doctrine of the image of God. Love, which Jones refers to as “God’s reigning attribute,” is at the core of the moral image of God. A restoration of this image, with all the passions, emotions, desires, and deep-level lives of humanity, is directly tied to grace. It

⁵ Outler, Albert C. & Richard P. Heitzenrater, *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 336.

⁶ Jones, Scott J. *United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 148.

is God's grace alone that restores and makes new. According to John Wesley, this image is still marred by sin and unrestored until "the bent of our nature is changed, that is, till we are born again."⁷ It is this ultimate act of grace – the gift of new life – that restores the image of God.

The grace of God is of primary concern in Wesleyan theology; indeed, it undergirds the Wesleyan theological enterprise. The thesis of this paper – that John Wesley's understanding of God's grace restoring the *Imago Dei* within the individual offers a critically important and holistic lens through which to approach healing – is elucidated cogently by Randy Maddox. According to Maddox, the corpus of Wesley's theology is defined by grace:

I discerned in Wesley's work an abiding concern to preserve the vital tension between two truths that he viewed as co-definitive of Christianity: without God's grace, we *cannot* be saved; while without our (grace-empowered, but uncoerced) participation, God's grace *will not* save. I have chosen to designate this as a concern about 'responsible grace' ...it makes clear that God's indispensable gift of gracious forgiveness and empowerment is fundamental, while capturing Wesley's characteristic qualification of such empowerment as enabling rather than overriding human responsibility.⁸

Maddox's formulation honors the agency of the individual to accept or reject grace (this is the empowered-yet-uncoerced notion); God's grace, while not dependent or defined by human response, works in concert with the will of the individual. In other words, it is not the nature but the effects of grace that are accomplished by humanity's appropriation. Maddox shows how Wesley's understanding was shaped by the Eastern

⁷ Outler and Heitzenrater, *John Wesley's Sermon*, 342.

⁸ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 19.

Church, which understood the image of God as the “human potential for life in God.”⁹

The fall affected the pursuit and flourishing of this potential, but it did not “deprive us of all grace, or of the accountability for responding to God’s offer of restored communion in Christ...[therefore] co-operation in divine/human interactions remains ever after the Fall.”¹⁰ Along with the Eastern church, Wesley spent significant time focusing on a third human condition, after the first (pre-Fall) and second (post-Fall): that is, “the gracious and gradual restoration of humanity to God-likeness.”¹¹

Francis MacNutt writes that restoration of the whole person was, in fact, the mission of Jesus himself:

The time of the Messiah would be a time of healing, of liberation, of salvation. Because the Hebrews did not think of human beings as divided into body and soul, but as whole persons, when they spoke of salvation they thought not only of saving but of healing persons. And our person includes our body, our feelings, and our spirits...the healing acts of Jesus were themselves the message that he had come to set us free; they were not just to prove that his message was true. In a very basic sense, his medium was his message. The sign of salvation was that people were actually being saved, restored to all that they had lost.¹²

This point is made evident in Luke chapter 4, where Jesus’ holistic message of salvation is revealed, showing that the restoration of the image of God in the individual encompasses the entire human condition. When Jesus reads from Isaiah in the temple, he proclaimed that “the Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and

⁹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 66.

¹⁰ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 66.

¹¹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 67.

¹² MacNutt, Francis, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1999), 41-42.

recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus' salvific message, therefore, was to redeem and restore all that had become marred, bound, and held captive. Restoring the image of God within the individual was not to prove his message; it was his message.

This proper condition, the one in which humanity was created and the condition to which humanity may be restored through grace, is expressed relationally. Wesley understood God to be a relational God, and that the restoration of the image of God is seen most clearly where there are proper relational qualities between God, humanity, and creation. It is a return to a proper condition that constitutes a restored image, and these relational aspects become the "fruits" that speak to the reality of the restored image.

Consider Maddox when he writes

The proper relationship to God is knowing, loving, obeying, and enjoying God eternally (i.e. participation). The proper relationship to other humans is loving service. The proper relationship to all other animals is loving protection. When each of these relationships are properly expressed, we will also have a proper relationship to ourselves of self-acceptance.¹³

Lastly, Wesley adopted an integrative approach to healing, all of it being a gift of grace regardless of whether it was accomplished through natural means, such as medicine or diet, or the result of prayer and laying on of hands. And God should always receive the glory. When speaking of one who claimed the gift of healing and interpreted its application as a sign of the end of time, Wesley rejected this understanding of the gift. According to Robert Webster, "this...was a distortion of the concept of healing because it

¹³ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 68.

bifurcated the alliance of nature and grace in God's plan of redemption.”¹⁴ In other words, Wesley perceived God's gracious activity of healing as being part of the larger narrative of God's grace, which is always to redeem and restore.

Pneumatology

Any explication of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit must first begin with the doctrine of the Trinity. In both the Old and New Testaments, the Godhead is revealed as both one and three, as unity and triunity. According to Owen Thomas and Ellen Wondra, “in the doctrine of God, the most fundamental thing to say is that God is self-revealed as triune, as threefold, named in the New Testament as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”¹⁵ The Athanasian Creed, the first creed of the church to substantially develop the doctrine of the Trinity, describes the nature of the Trinity as follows: “and the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence.”¹⁶ The creed then continues to elaborate the essence and nature of each member of the Godhead.

As Thomas and Wondra point out, “the doctrine of the Trinity is the result of the church's reflection on the biblical testimony in the face of various distorted

¹⁴ Webster, Robert. *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley's Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Methodists in the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2013), 180.

¹⁵ Thomas, Owen and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 67.

¹⁶ The Athanasian Creed.

interpretations.”¹⁷ The creeds were born out of theological controversy and were attempts by the church to establish proper doctrine. It is with that in mind that the Athanasian Creed makes two important points regarding the Trinity: it explicitly rejects the heresies of subordination and tritheism. Subordinationism was the assertion in the early church that both the Son and the Holy Spirit were subordinate to the Father in both nature and essence, and tritheism¹⁸ was the belief in three distinct deities. Proper Trinitarian belief holds that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in every way in their nature and essence, three-in-one, with no one person of the Trinity being superior to, or separate from, any other person.

Theologians have often described the Trinity in terms of immanence and economy: “who God is in God’s self (the immanent Trinity), and who God is in relation to God’s creation (the economic Trinity).”¹⁹ The former is concerned with the nature and essence of the Godhead, while the latter is centered on the Triune God’s activity within the created order. It becomes immediately clear that this is no easy task, and that to some degree, it is quite difficult to discuss God’s nature apart from God’s activity in the world, and vice versa. With this in mind, we will turn to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with the intention of discovering both the nature and activity of the third member of the Godhead.

¹⁷ Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 67.

¹⁸ Some religious groups continue to espouse this belief, or a closely related iteration of it. One contemporary example is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, who teach that the Godhead is three distinct and separate beings united in common purpose.

¹⁹ Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 72.

In his three-volume systematic theology, J. Rodman Williams writes: “it is apparent that the Holy Spirit, while a distinguishable entity, is inseparable from Christ and the Father. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Father and of Son. But also the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, hence identical with the reality of God Himself.”²⁰ Therefore, the third person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit – is himself a distinguishable entity but also simultaneously unknowable apart from the person and work of the Father and the Son. The immanent and economic Trinity reveal that the personhood and activity of each person is inextricably tied to that of the other persons.

Amos Yong develops this point further:

God as triune is revealed in the Father, as source; in the begotten Son, as taking up history into the divine life; and in the proceeding or spirating Spirit from the Father and the Son, as holding forth and bringing about the promise of future redemption. Yet from the latter eschatological vantage point, it is the Spirit of the Father poured out by the Son who brings creation back through the Son to the Father...the Spirit makes present God’s future promises in Christ (proleptically) and in the church (anticipatorily)...”²¹

The last point in that quote is especially pertinent to the thesis of this paper: the Spirit becomes one through which the work of Christ and all its benefits are conferred upon the believer and the church. In the words of Thomas Oden, “he [the Holy Spirit] is sent by the Son to execute the Son’s mission to the world.”²² According to Matthew 8:16-17, “When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he

²⁰ Williams, J. Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1990), 139.

²¹ Yong, Amos, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 320.

²² Oden, Thomas C., *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology Volume Three* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1992), 15.

drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.’” All that was accomplished by Christ on the cross – this “taking up history into the divine life” – and it is mediated to humanity through the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. It is therefore reasonable to assert that the Holy Spirit is the one who brings both the benefits of healing and the gifts necessary for this to be accessed and realized.

The Holy Spirit also recreates and restores. In writing on the power of the Holy Spirit, Oden writes,

Through directly touching, meeting, and indwelling within the human spirit, God the Spirit gives new life to the deep-level, sustains the soul through the hazards of moral bankruptcy, and works to draw human freedom without coercion back to its original purpose of refracting the goodness of God...God is at work in the soul from the beginning of its creation to its final restoration.²³

The Holy Spirit is the member of the Godhead who brings not only the gift of new life and sanctification, he also restores the image of God within the person. The Spirit creates and recreates the person who was made in the image of God, and who, upon regeneration, finds that image restored to its original intent: to reflect the goodness of its Creator.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology refers to the study of the church; it is derived from the Greek word used in the New Testament for the church, *ekklēsia*. J. Rodman Williams writes that the

²³ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 37.

predominant way *ekklēsia* is used in the New Testament implies a community of people who have been “called out”:

The church consists of those who have been ‘called out.’ This is its basic meaning. The word *ekklēsia* is derived from two Greek words, *ek*, ‘out,’ and *kalō*, ‘call’; hence, the church is composed of ‘called out’ people...the calling is not from ordinary responsibilities but from the dark situation of sin and evil...thus the church consists of those ‘called out’ of darkness into light.²⁴

Oden writes this about the word *ekklēsia*: “the apostles used the word to refer to the act of assembling or the assemblage of persons brought together by God’s own calling for the purpose of hearing the gospel and sitting at the table with the living Lord.”²⁵ The church is an assembly of people who have heeded the call of the Lord and have responded to the gospel mandate. It is a community in direct relationship to its head, Jesus Christ. But from what have these assembled believers been called out from? 1 Peter 2:9 records this: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” The Scriptures indicate that there are two spiritual realities, and all people are part of one or the other: either the realm of darkness or the realm of light. The church consists of people who have been called out of one realm into another, from darkness to light.

Systematic theologian Larry Hart defines the church this way:

Christianity is a community of faith centered around the person of Jesus Christ. It is a Trinitarian community of hope, experiencing and confessing God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Further, it is a community that, according to its founder

²⁴ Williams, J. Rodman, *Renewal Theology: The Church, the Kingdom, and Last Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 17.

²⁵ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 265.

Jesus Christ, is marked supremely (or should be) as a fellowship of divine love. This community...is known as the church...²⁶

In this cursory overview of the church, there are a few key theological points worth mentioning. The church is a community of persons who have come together to embody a particular faith expression. Most significant is that the focal point of the church, that core element which unites it across place and time, is the person of Jesus Christ. It is Trinitarian, and this Triune orientation is expressed in the beliefs and life of the gathered body, as it proclaims and worships the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love should be the defining characteristic of the church; the Apostle Paul spoke to this truth in his first letter to the Corinthians. For the church, love must define all that it says and does.

Historically, the church emerged as a result of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts is instructive in recording the beginnings of this movement. Oden writes,

The church's life is shaped by special attention and devotion to 'the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer' (Acts 2:42). All essential elements of the church are embryonically present in this early fourfold description of the church: apostolic doctrine, community, sacrament, and common worship.²⁷

This example of the early church, the community birthed out of Pentecost, establishes the normative pattern for the church's life. The church is defined by its expression of doctrine, community, the sacraments, and shared worship life. As one reads

²⁶ Hart, *Truth Aflame*, 535.

²⁷ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 261.

the book of Acts, much of the Pauline corpus, and the Pastoral epistles, one sees the early church wrestling with and further developing church life in relation to these four areas.

The early church was concerned with proper doctrine, with the appropriate boundaries to determine the community, who should hold leadership in the church, and how the church should relate to those outside of it.

Integrating Healing, the Holy Spirit, and the Church

This paper will turn to briefly examining and integrating the ministry of healing, the Holy Spirit, and the church. It will look to see how healing ministry occurs within the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. While this must necessarily be a very brief overview, this cursory integration is informative to the larger thesis and project. This integrative section will set forth three premises: 1) that the Holy Spirit makes possible for each member of the body of Christ to minister healing through his gracious gifting; 2) that the Holy Spirit is the animating factor building up the church, the impetus for greater unity, and spurring it forward in its mission (of which healing has been shown to be part), and 3) the Biblical model is that healing should be nurtured within the context of all other spiritual gifts and should “occur only in relationship to the believing community and its exaltation of the living Christ,”²⁸ to whom the Holy Spirit always testifies.

Thomas and Wondra write that “Jesus’ purpose in calling this community [the church] together was that its members would represent him in preaching and *healing*

²⁸ Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, 216.

(emphasis added)."²⁹ Instead of a particular creed or set of behaviors or instructions, Jesus modeled for believers the way the church should live out the gospel message. Numerous Biblical texts attest to this. Perhaps one of the most pertinent is John 14:12, which is part of Jesus' farewell discourse (John 14-17) to his disciples. He said, "whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." For Christians, doing the things Jesus did is part of being a believer.

Two key points emerge from this verse. The first is that healing was to be a normative part of the believer's life. The healing ministry was an integral part of Jesus' ministry, and in this verse, Jesus taught that it was to be a part of those his followers' ministry, too. Secondly, when this verse is taken in context with the rest of the farewell discourse and the book of Acts, Scripture teaches that it is the Holy Spirit who works healing through believers. It is through Jesus' return to the Father that the promise of the Spirit is realized. When believers minister healing through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church is living into its mission: to represent Jesus to the world.

Another key ecclesiological point inferred from John 14:12 is that participating in the healing ministry is available to all believers; it is not something reserved for a certain role or someone with a particular degree of spiritual maturity. The "priesthood of all believers,"³⁰ a tenet that has defined Protestantism since its inception, greatly affected the

²⁹ Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 258.

³⁰ This particular doctrine finds its roots in Pentecost, when spiritual gifts were poured out upon all people by the Holy Spirit as prophesied in Joel 2. It is also explicitly developed in two Biblical passages. 1 Peter 2:9 records that believers are "royal priests, a holy nation," and Revelation 5:10, "through your blood you have made us into priests and kings."

Methodist movement and its subsequent streams (the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism, various charismatic expressions, etc.) that have placed a heavy emphasis upon the ministry of the laity.

The gift of healing is given by the Holy Spirit within the context of the church: “‘gifts of healings’ are undoubtedly individual appointments by the Holy Spirit within the community of believers.”³¹ It is in 1 Corinthians 12, within the context of teaching on the proper functioning of the church, that Paul teaches on the gifts, one of which is healing. Rodman further develops this concept, showing that it is the same Spirit who gives the gift that also effects the gift:

It is significant this gift of the Spirit is not healings as such but *gifts* of healings. This is the only gift (*charisma*) that is gifts (*charismata*), hence the gift is not healings as such but gifts or *charismata* of healings. Thus the one who receives such gifts does not directly perform the healings; rather he simply transmits the gifts. He is a kind of ‘delivery boy’ who brings the gifts to others. Hence such a person does not become a healer even for a moment: he or she only passes on the healings to others.³²

Rodman holds that as there are many types of infirmities, sicknesses, and diseases, so there are a variety of giftings of healing that are given to minister to varied human needs, yet is the same Spirit who bestows the gifts and ministers the healing. Yong writes,

The *missio Spiritus* builds up the body of Christ...the Acts narrative indicates that the Spirit-empowered people of God met regularly to break bread, for fellowship and worship, to receive teaching and instruction, but that as a by-product, ‘day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved’ (Acts 2:47). In

³¹ Rodman, *Renewal Theology*, 367.

³² Rodman, *Renewal Theology*, 367.

short, the unifying activity of the body of Christ and edifying effects of the people of God living in the Spirit have a missional dimension and application.³³

It is through this pattern of the church set forth in Acts 2 – of the people of God, moving in the Holy Spirit and attending upon the fourfold pattern of normative life together – that the church is able to have an impact on the wider world. In this context, healing can serve both to minister within the church among its members and as a tool for mission, bringing people into the body of Christ through an encounter with healing ministry. In this way, the body of Christ is built up through the empowering activity of the Holy Spirit.

Richard McAlear writes that, among the body of believers, the Holy Spirit grants power and authority and commissions healing, yet often the barrier to healing is believers not operating in the gifts given to them:

God has given the power to heal, the authority to heal, as well as the commission to heal the Church...the problem is not that we do not know how or that we do not have the capacity, the gift, or the authority. What is lacking seems to be the will to do what God has asked and the faith to take up the call. With deep patience God waits for us to take what He has given us and do what He has asked us to do: minister to the sick with prayerful faith and with a healing touch...healing prayer is part of a deep current of God's Spirit in the Church today, teaching the Church how to be the Church. Each believer is a part of the body of Christ and therefore part of one another. There are no isolated Christians.³⁴

Healing reveals to the body of Christ how to be the church; the church must lay claim to this gift through faith and willingly exercise it. When individual members of the church operate it this gift, it carries with it the authority of the ministry of the entire church, and believers gain a deeper understanding of the larger body.

³³ Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, 186-187.

³⁴ McAlear, Richard. *The Power of Healing Prayer: Overcoming Emotional and Psychological Barriers* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2013), 49.

Finally, the church is the context through which the Spirit activates and mediates gifts of healing. 1 Corinthians 12 clearly teaches that healing is to operate within the church and in cooperation with other spiritual gifts:

Christians receive various gifts of the Spirit for different functions in the community. These are given for the benefit and well-being of the whole community. So the church is the body of Christ in that the Spirit of Christ gives gifts to the members, so that they may function in a way analogous to that in which parts of the human body function in relation to the whole body (1 Corinthians 12)...the life and well-being of the community depends on the service and function of all members, and it suffers if any of the members is separated from the community...thus the church is the body of Christ in that each of the functions made possible by the Spirit of Christ is necessary for its well-being.³⁵

There is a deleterious effect upon the body of Christ if the gift of healing is not nurtured and practiced among all the gifts in the church. The other gifts, and the ability of the entire body of function the way it was intended suffer when one gift is neglected:

It is urgent that no gift of the Holy Spirit be denigrated, despised, suppressed, or set aside. All gifts have their proper and essential place in the full functioning of the body of Christ. Even if one gift, one member, is missing or not functioning, the body is sorely handicapped. When each performs his Spirit-given part, then verily the body is both able to function normally and to be built up in faith and ministry.³⁶

Just as none of the gifts are meant to operate independently of one another, so individuals are meant to exercise these gifts within the context of the church, the body of Christ, that divine group meant to exalt Jesus and represent him to the world. Truly, the gifts derive their identity and efficacy within the context of the larger church, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12.

³⁵ Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 259.

³⁶ Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 339.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to bring together and integrate John Wesley's understanding of the image of God, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and the role of the body of Christ in the ministry of healing. There is significant overlap in these areas, yet they all integrate and work together, providing the Wesleyan believer with a framework to engage this vital ministry. For Wesley, the restoration of the image of God was at the core of his *via salutis* (the way of salvation), which centered on God's preventing grace in drawing people to himself, justifying grace in saving them, and sanctifying grace in conforming them into the image of Christ. A reading of Wesley indicates that he understood healing as an integral and necessary part of the entire restorative project; healing had a place in his *via salutis*. These movements of God's grace have the effect of restoring the image of the Creator in which people were made.

The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who mediates the benefit of Christ's work on the cross, the work through which God's grace is made available to humanity. The Holy Spirit is also the one who bestows gifts upon the church; one of which is healing. The benefits and reality of healing come from Christ's work on the cross; it was all accomplished at that moment. The Holy Spirit works within the church to glorify Christ and to build up the body in its ministry and witness to the world. All of this – the work of the Holy Spirit in the church to heal and restore – is a gift of grace.

This theological foundation is vital, not only for my doctoral project, but also for my ministry context. Wesleyan believers need a robust and clear understanding of God's grace in restoring the image of God within the individual, the person and work of the

Holy Spirit in restoring this image, and how the gift of healing functions within the church to restore and make new.

One of the key areas that the God's Spirit renews is the mind. Scripture reminds again and again that the mind influences behavior, actions, speech, and more. Our interior and exterior lives are inextricably linked. The next chapter will center on how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a subset of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, can be in conversation with Truth Therapy in an effort to renew and heal the life of the mind, so that we might more faithfully and fully love God, neighbor, and ourselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

A proper approach to deep-level healing requires integration of and ministry to the entire person: mind, body, and spirit; deep-level healing sees the human being as a continual interplay between these pieces of personhood. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, reveal that we are created in the image of God and as such are people with physical, emotional, and spiritual capacity. Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37-39 speak to the ultimate purpose of human existence: loving God and others with “heart, soul, mind, and strength.” In other words, human beings were meant to have holistic health, for mind, body, and spirit to be whole and engaged in love and service. Therefore, a deep-level healing ministry seeks to bring these varied facets of being into alignment with divine purposes, both for individuals and for their relationships with each other and with God.

The entry point into healing and total wellness, for the abundant life for which God designed humanity, is through the inner life. Scripture is replete with teaching regarding this. Proverbs 4:23 instructs as follows: “keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” Jesus, in his Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6, teaches in verse 45 that “a good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and

an evil man brings up evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” To attempt to bifurcate the inner and outer person risks rending asunder what God has designed to operate together. However, there is ample Scriptural and biological evidence to support that assertion that outer life – the physical body, relationships, environmental concerns – flow from and are directly impacted by the inner life – the emotional, mental, and spiritual elements, and that the outer and inner self are engaged in a perpetual relationship. Both must be taken together to experience true, lasting, Biblical healing.

It is with this inextricable relationship in mind that this paper will engage and put into conversation the following: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a counseling technique concerned with being aware and mindful of values and thought patterns and their effect on behavior, and Truth Therapy, a theory and practice developed by Dr. Peter Bellini, which centers on renewal of the mind with Scripture meditation. Both will be considered as they relate to identity: discovering and understanding who believers are in Christ. Both of these paradigms draw heavily on cognitive behavioral therapy, a technique that focuses on the relationship and interplay between thought patterns and behaviors. Special attention will be given to the concept of mindfulness, a pillar of ACT, and its interaction with Scripture meditation and the renewal of the mind that the Apostle Paul talks about in Romans 12. It is the thesis of this paper that attending to the inner self through thoughts, attitudes, and values, examining their effect on identity, and bringing them in line with the Word of God and the healing presence of Jesus is imperative in deep-level healing, and will have a subsequent direct impact on all facets of the outer self. The renewal of the mind of which Paul speaks in Romans 12 as a

consequence of the work of the Holy Spirit will be examined as a core component of deep-level healing.

ACT therapy

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is a therapeutic approach within the cognitive and behavioral field of psychotherapy. According to Harris, ACT

gets you in touch with what really matters in the big picture: your heart's deepest desires for whom you want to be and what you want to do during your brief time on this planet. You then use these core values to guide, motivate, and inspire behavioral change. Second, it's about "mindful" action: action that you take consciously, with full awareness—open to your experience and fully engaged in whatever you're doing.¹

From this brief definition, two important points emerge. ACT therapy begins with the principle that core values influence and guide behavior, and that addressing these values is key to realizing purpose. Once these values are discovered, the individual can begin to take action that puts these core values into practice. The action that one takes, however, is intentional; it is "mindful," and this brief treatment of ACT therapy will predominantly focus on the concept of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a central component of this paradigm; and serves as the methodology by which one is able to truly attend to their inner self at any given moment or circumstance, regardless of exterior factors and influences. It is the ability to "rise above" the present moment, to not allow situational factors to prompt a reaction. A good definition is as follows:

It [mindfulness] is a 'hot topic' in Western psychology right now – increasingly recognized as a powerful intervention for everything from work stress to depression, to increasing emotional intelligence, to enhancing performance.

¹ Harris, Russ, *ACT Made Simple: An Easy-to-Read Primer on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2009), 2.

Mindfulness basically means paying attention with openness, curiosity, and flexibility. In a state of mindfulness, difficult thoughts and feelings have much less impact and influence over behavior...²

The authors go on to highlight three aspects of mindfulness:

Defusion: distancing from, and letting go of, unhelpful thoughts, beliefs, and memories; acceptance: making room for painful feelings, urges, and sensations, and allowing them to come and go without a struggle; contact with the present moment: engaging fully with your here-and-now experience, with an attitude of openness and curiosity.³

Mindfulness, then, is embraces the totality of human experience – the good, bad, and neutral – and integrates the past with the present as one moves into the future.

Mindfulness encourages the person to engage with negative emotions, memories, and experiences, instead of seeking to escape them. It is an entire reorienting of one's relationship to emotions and feelings in such a way that people "broaden their repertoire of overt and private behaviors (such as thinking and feeling) even in the presence of difficult emotions and circumstances."⁴ Mindfulness is a way that one can allow "all thoughts, emotions, and sensations to enter awareness without judgement, avoidance, or repression."⁵ New and helpful strategies are intentionally developed that allow for flexibly engaging "present-moment, nonjudgmental form of awareness."⁶

Daniel Siegel expands upon this notion in his book *Mindsight*, in which he sets forth numerous principles related to ACT. One of the most pertinent related to deep-level

² Kashdan, Todd B. and Joseph Ciarrochi, editors, *Mindfulness, Acceptance, and Positive Psychology: The Seven Foundations of Well-Being* (Oakland, CA: Context Press, 2013), 3.

³ Kashdan and Ciarrochi, *Mindfulness*, 3.

⁴ Kashdan and Ciarrochi, *Mindfulness*, 78.

⁵ Kashdan and Ciarrochi, *Mindfulness*, 81.

⁶ Kashdan and Ciarrochi, *Mindfulness*, 78.

healing is how Siegel treats the ability to be self-reflective; that is, to “reflect on who we really are and what is going on inside us.”⁷ To this end, Siegel writes of three facets of reflection that allow for the individual to engage in mindsight, or, put another way, to initiate a process of emotional healing. These three facets are: openness, observation, and objectivity.⁸ These three components will be discussed in some detail here, since they will later be put into conversation later with Truth Therapy and integrated into the larger deep-level healing project.

Openness refers to the ability receive those things that come into awareness without judgement, but to simply receive events as they are from moment to moment. Siegel says that openness “gives us the power to recognize restrictive judgements and release our minds from their grip.”⁹ The second concept, observation, “is the ability to perceive the self even as we are experiencing an event...observation offers a powerful way to disengage from automatic behaviors and responses; we can see our role in these patterns and begin to find ways to alter them.”¹⁰ Finally, objectivity recruits the ability of the mind to be aware that its present activities – our thoughts, feelings, memories, beliefs, and intentions – are temporary, and, moreover, that they are not the totality of who we are. They are not our identity. Objectivity allows us to develop what is sometimes called discernment. With discernment we can see that a thought or feeling is just mental activity, not absolute reality.¹¹

⁷ Siegel, Daniel, *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2010), 31.

⁸ Siegel, *Mindsight*, 31.

⁹ Siegel, *Mindsight*, 32.

¹⁰ Siegel, *Mindsight*, 32.

¹¹ Siegel, *Mindsight*, 32.

When these three concepts come together and form the basis of reflection, “we can sense the out-of-control emotions as a mere part of the story of who we are. We gain the crucial capacity to deal with an intense emotion without becoming lost to it. This can make all the difference between explosion and expression.”¹² When engaged in reflective practice, the individual, instead of becoming captive to thoughts and feelings, is instead able to exercise more agency over themselves. This is freeing, not only psychologically, but spiritually, as well.

The interplay between this reflective paradigm and deep-level healing may begin to take shape. Charles Kraft refers to inner healing as “deep-level healing,”¹³ and has developed a methodology that is saturated with prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit in ministering this sort of healing. According to Kraft¹⁴, one of the most significant obstacles to deep-level healing is that so many who need such healing have become captive to past hurts and trauma, and this has a significant effect on identity and relationships. He writes,

People are hurting. Just as in Jesus’ day, many of us have been beaten up by Satan...he tries, often quite effectively, to mess up our relationship with God. We were made to experience closeness with our Creator, but that intimacy often eludes us. Our relationship with ourselves is often negative. As I talk to people about their self-image, I find that the majority of them at least dislike, if not hate, themselves. They often hold a very low opinion of this person they are supposed to love. Our relationships with others are often warped as well. For many, the list

¹² Siegel, *Mindsight*, 33.

¹³ Kraft, Charles, *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing* (Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2010), 35

¹⁴ Kraft’s influential work *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing* provides a comprehensive overview of inner healing, and has become a standard bearer in the field of inner healing. Kraft prefers the term “deep - level healing,” for he has discovered that such healing ministry often deals with the core, or spirit, of an individual. In other words, this is restorative ministry speaking to the innermost part, or deepest level, of the individual. His work has been crucial in guiding the framework of this project, and I am deeply indebted to his paradigm of deep-level healing.

of those they dislike, envy, harbor anger toward or even hate is much longer than the list of those they genuinely care about.¹⁵

If the individual is lovingly empowered through the Holy Spirit and reflective practice to exercise authority over thoughts and feelings, the mind renewal that Paul talks about in Romans 12 can begin. Mind renewal will be discussed in depth later in this paper, but it is helpful to note here that this sort of transformation can begin when thoughts and feelings are seen as something to which individuals may objectively and mindfully respond, not things which control and which prompt reaction. This is very much in keeping with the paradigm espoused by ACT.

The Apostle Paul is helpful here for situating this discussion in a Christian perspective and evidencing the authority believers have in Christ. In his second letter to the Corinthians, within a larger discussion of how the Christian acts in ways distinct from the world, he wrote that believers “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).” In doing so, strongholds of the enemy are destroyed, and worldly powers lose their influence. What ACT and the Apostle Paul both reveal is that individuals can exercise agency over their thoughts. One does not need to live a life captive to detrimental, degrading, demeaning thoughts. There is hope for change!

According to Matthew 28:20 and Luke 9:1-2, Jesus’ disciples are given the authority to bring freedom to those held captive – and that includes people imprisoned by thoughts and feelings. This authority is modeled after the ministry of Jesus as recorded Luke 4, when he applied the words of the prophet Isaiah to his mission: “The Spirit of the

¹⁵ Kraft, *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing*, 35.

Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19)." Taking thoughts and feelings captive, instead of being held captive by them, is freedom for the imprisoned and freedom for the oppressed. Using these promises from the Scriptures for the renewal of the entire individual is an exercise in Truth Therapy, which will comprise the next section of this paper.

Truth Therapy

Dr. Petey Bellini has developed a system that integrates wisdom from Cognitive Behavioral therapy and the Word of God in a way that seeks to minister holistically to the entire person. Bellini defines Truth Therapy in this way:

Truth Therapy draws from truths found in Scripture and applies them for the purpose of discipleship, which is transformation in the image of Christ...Truth Therapy applies the word of God as a means of grace to facilitate repentance, faith, and a stronger relationship with Christ. Thus, it is not a self-help, pop psychology, or even a pyramid scheme to attaining self-success, which we find in so many prosperity messages. The goal is Christ-likeness in thought, word, and deed, and the daily experience of the Spirit's work of faith, hope, and love saturated in perfect peace.¹⁶

Bellini goes on to write that

God wants to sanctify or make holy, whole, and healthy all humanity and all of creation. TT is a process that can help us to work with God's word and transform our lives by changing the way we think. We unlearn our way of thinking and begin to see ourselves as God sees us. We begin to think God's thoughts, and the transformation process begins.¹⁷

¹⁶ Bellini, Peter J., *Truth Therapy: Renewing Your Mind with the Word of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 10.

¹⁷ Bellini, *Truth Therapy*, 15.

The foundational premise of Truth Therapy is that the mind must be constantly renewed with the promises of God found in the Scriptures and mediated and applied by the indwelling Holy Spirit. One of the key texts for Truth Therapy is found in Romans 12:2; the Apostle Paul encourages believers to “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” There is a clear purpose for mind renewal, explained in the following verse: “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Truth Therapy seeks to change thinking that is not in line with God’s purposes; when this shift occurs, from worldly thinking to renewed thinking, the believer will not only be able to discern God’s will, but to properly apply it.

This results in a total, holistic alignment with God’s design and the truth found in His purposes. Bellini continues:

When all things are aligned with the truth of Jesus Christ, his word, and his reign, then healing and restoration can begin (Eph 1). Salvation and peace entail wholeness, goodness, and blessing in every area of life. This is God’s cosmic plan that Jesus Christ rule in *shalom* over all things. This is God’s mission in the earth in which the church is called to participate...God’s salvation (*soteria*) establishes peace (*shalom*) in every area of life until all things are transfigured in Christ’s image and gathered up in Christ, who subjects them to the Father.¹⁸

What ACT therapy describes as the ability to examine thoughts and feelings in a neutral way without being significantly negatively affected by them is really a condition of shalom. It is to experience the holistic peace which is available to the believer. It is to find freedom and liberation in the inner life, which spills out and shapes the outer life. It is a result of divine alignment, and when thoughts and feelings are gathered up in Christ

¹⁸ Bellini, *Truth Therapy*, 31.

and placed under his Lordship and reign, the mind is renewed and is continually renewed as the believer practices this daily.

It is helpful, then, to consider the relationship between transformed thinking, what Paul calls mind renewal, and deep-level healing. This paper will turn to the role of the mind in experiencing transformation, how the mind renewed by the Holy Spirit leads to freedom from anxiety, worry, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, and other forms of emotional and spiritual trauma. Transformation is a key concept in deep-level healing; to be transformed is to experience a change from one state, form, or condition into another. It is to shift commitment and adherence to one set of ideals, values, and beliefs to another. It is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, not through the effort of the individual alone.

In his exhaustive tome *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking*, Craig Keener writes that

Believers will be transformed by the renewing of their minds; this renewal enables them to evaluate the present age from the values of the perfect world to come, and thus not to be pressured into conformity with the character of the present age. A believer can often identify God's will rationally by recognizing what is good, pleasing, and perfect in God's sight...the renewing of the mind occurs alongside growing in God-and Christ-directed faith, or trust, which inherently involves a relationship with God and Christ...such trust and renewal in God's likeness grow in proportion to a living experience of God.¹⁹

Several pertinent points emerge from this treatment of the renewal of the mind. Keener points out that the renewed mind has a new set of evaluative criteria: that which is “good, pleasing, and perfect in God's sight. God's will now becomes the standard by

¹⁹ Keener, Craig, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 172.

which the life of the mind is determined. This shift in thought life is also accompanied by a deepening relationship with God and Christ; there is a reciprocal affect to this. As the disciple grows more in Christlike faith, there is an increased ability to perceive the will of God, which continues to transform the mind.

Mind renewal allows for a sense of clarity when evaluating competing thoughts and values; in the believer's case, this is between the worldly system and the Kingdom of God. This has overlap with openness, observation, and objectivity, the three facets of reflectiveness that comprise Siegel's take on ACT. One significant point of divergence is that within the Christian worldview, the ability to not be held captive by worldly thoughts but instead to be conformed to a different way of thinking is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, not something accomplished merely through human efforts. Gordon Fee describes it this way:

The only coming to Christ known to Paul is one in which the life of the believer has been invaded by the life-giving Spirit, who both applies the redemptive work of the cross and also transforms us from within, by the 'renewing of the mind' (Rom 12:2). All of Paul's metaphors of 'before' and 'after' speak in the same way of the radical transformation of life that the Spirit brings...such life manifests itself in the radically new life of God given by the Spirit.²⁰

In any deep-level healing ministry in which significant attention is paid to thoughts that are harmful and distorted, it will be imperative to keep the work of the Holy Spirit at the fore, through prayer and intentionally creating an environment that invites the Holy Spirit to work and minister the benefits of the cross, one of which, according to the Apostle Paul, is the renewal of the mind. This has consequences not only for the ministered-to, but the one who ministers deep-level healing in the power of God's Spirit. The one

²⁰ Fee, Gordon, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 93.

ministering must attend to their own inner life, making sure they are pure and seeking after God's renewal. With deep-level healing in mind, this paper will now turn to integrating some of the concepts elucidated above into a project for ministering deep-level healing.

Mind Renewal and Deep-level Healing

Thus far, this paper has examined ACT and Biblical concepts regarding the life of the mind, particularly as described in Truth Therapy and Romans 12:1-3, as a means of transforming thoughts and feelings from entrapment to harmful and distorted thinking to that which is renewed by the Holy Spirit. Now, this paper will examine how these concepts might inform the ministry of deep-level healing.

Perhaps the most significant area of deep-level healing, one that has far-reaching implications for the entire person, is the area of identity. Identity, and how it relates to forgiveness and love, will be examined here. Identity is the most fundamental area of human life and the thing that Satan attacks with ferocity and tenacity. It is regarding identity that He attacked Adam and Even in Genesis 3:1-5. It is around identity that He sought to influence Jesus in Luke 4:1-13. And it is identity that can be fundamentally impacted, for good and for evil, through the mind. Identity is our self-understanding and conceptualization, at the deepest level of our being. The words that are spoken, past hurts and traumas, media that is consumed and enters the mind – all of this and more shapes identity. John Wimber defines deep-level healing in a way that incorporates the mind, will, and emotions – key markers of identity. Deep-level healing is “a process in which

the Holy Spirit brings forgiveness of sins and emotional renewal to people suffering from damaged minds, wills, and emotions.”²¹

From Wimber’s definition, we begin to see how deep-level healing engages the mind. Wimber frames this approach to deep-level healing as the work of the Holy Spirit; he is the primary actor in achieving deep-level healing. Forgiveness is the first thing Wimber describes the Holy Spirit doing; so much of deep-level healing is contingent on forgiving – forgiving oneself and others. Remaining in unforgiveness is one of the most significant barriers to realizing one’s true identity and experiencing total freedom – mind, body, and spirit. Wimber identifies renewal as key, and that deep-level healing engages “minds, wills, and emotions.” All of these components must experience deep-level and must be attended to for total healing.

As long as there are unresolved hurts from emotional trauma and spiritual wounds, and if these are allowed to fester, the individual will continue to live and operate out of a false identity. Forgiveness is primary; it is the key that unlocks the potential for healing. Craig Miller writes the following:

If you do not work through your feelings, each hurt and disappointment from the important people in your life...will continue to create more rings on the chain of unhealthy emotions. With each hurt, the chain becomes heavier and the feelings more intense. This accumulation of hurt from physical and/or emotional trauma will greatly affect how you feel inside emotionally, what you will believe about your healing, and how you will react to other people or situations...these unhealthy perceptions, created through hurtful experiences, become your reality and corrupt your ability to believe the truth about receiving healing, as well as your authority to minister healing to others.²²

²¹ Wimber, John, *Power Healing* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1987), 80.

²² Miller, Craig A. *Breaking Emotional Barriers to Healing: Understanding the Mind-Body Connection to Your Illness* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2018), 16-17.

That one particular observation is vital to this study of the renewed mind in deep-level healing: unhealthy perceptions, harmful experiences, traumas, abuse, and hurts create one's reality, and reality shapes identity. The harmful words of others, withheld parental love, intimate partner abuse – all of these negative experiences shape perception of self and others. It is through forgiveness and experiencing deep-level healing, that one can begin to discover our divine identity.

If forgiveness is primary to renewing the mind and realizing deep-level healing, it is through encountering Jesus that makes healing possible. In reflecting on Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman in John 4, Mary Healy remarks that

This story illustrates that it is first and foremost an encounter with Jesus that heals the human heart. We are created for God, and only God can satisfy the thirst within. The primary goal of healing ministry, therefore, is always to bring a person into an encounter with Jesus. Jesus alone knows the person from within – all their hurts, their sins and failures, their disappointments, their buried dreams. Jesus alone is able to reach into the depths of the person's memory and bring wholeness and freedom.²³

It is in bringing all that a person carries – memories, traumas, thoughts, behaviors, dreams – into the presence of Jesus that healing can occur. Jesus is the light that illuminates everything else; he is the one by whom all other notions of identity fall away in the company of the one in whom we find out true selves. Forgiveness allows the healing presence of Jesus to begin to affect the benefits of his grace and power; and it is out of that encounter that one's true identity in Christ can be developed.

The project that seeks to train others to minister deep-level healing must, therefore, begin with identity. It must be framed with fundamental truths about who

²³ Healy, Mary, *Healing: Bringing the Gift of God's Mercy to the World* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2015), 150-151.

believers are in Christ and provide prayer models and Scripture meditation that speaks these truths. When ministering those who are not yet believers, it will be absolutely imperative to present the Gospel and seek to lead them to the Lord, for it is only through the indwelling Holy Spirit that one can truly be set free from all that has wrought damage to the deep-level self.

Drawing from ACT, any training project on deep-level healing must work to differentiate the individual from their thoughts and beliefs. ACT teaches that the individual is not the total of his or her thoughts, feelings, and emotions; these are not one's identity. While the link between identity and its influencers has been established in this paper, this is an important point to make. The good news is that there is freedom in Christ that allows for deep-level change in thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Human beings are not bound forever to negative thoughts, harmful feelings, and destructive emotions. As mentioned above, with some guidance and effort, this will allow for the individual to engage with these components in way that allows for more openness, observation, and objectivity. The project will develop questions, guided practices, prayers, and other methods that engage thoughts, feelings, and emotions in this way. This might be achieved through journaling with guided questions or praying and repeating Scriptures that relate a Biblical perspective on the deep-level life. All of this and more will be incorporated into the project.

Conclusion

This paper has put ACT, Truth Therapy, and the Scriptural treatment of the renewed mind, particularly in terms of identity, in conversation with each other. Both

ACT and Truth Therapy have a shared emphasis on changing thought patterns, developing mindfulness, and allowing the individual to find freedom from damaging thoughts and emotions. Concepts in both paradigms can allow the believer to ascertain healing and recover the identity God intends for them – one defined by Him and his unconditional love, rather than harmful thoughts, negative emotions, or abuses inflicted upon the self through one's own actions or the actions of others.

While ACT offers helpful tools for a deep-level healing project, when taken alone it ultimately fails, because it posits the autonomy and authority of the individual to change their own thoughts and feelings. As has been shown in this paper, victory in this area of life is won by the work of the Holy Spirit and encounter with Jesus Christ. It is only the Triune God working in and through people that deep-level change of any sort is possible. For the sake of this project, it will be imperative to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit and continually invite his power and presence in renewing the mind and accomplishing deep-level healing. As Paul reminds the believers whom he addressed in Philippians 1:6: “being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Deep-level healing begins with the interior life. When Jesus said that “the mouth speaks what the heart is full of,” he was speaking to the truth that the interior is made evident in the exterior; behaviors are an outflow of what occurs in the mind. Deep-level healing moves beyond the exterior, seeing that as a manifestation of the inner life. To experience the sort of freedom Jesus died to give humanity, attention must be given to healing thoughts, the effects of hurtful words and abuse, false notions of identity, and other interior aspects of life that the Father of Lies has attempted to distort and corrupt.

As Dr. Bellini writes in his work on Truth Therapy, experiencing deep-level healing is part of sanctification, to conform the believer more fully into Christlikeness. John and Paula Sanford describes sanctification as “the process by which we come to rest in Him...the end process is not only a new person but also a clean one.”²⁴ Resting in Christ and being made new and clean in him has significant implications for one’s identity; it helps human beings contextualize their stories in the larger framework of God’s story. Deep-level healing is a way to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5),” to subject this vital area of life to the Lordship of Christ. When approached this way, with a desire to become a more deeply engaged disciple of Jesus Christ, renewal of the mind and transformation of thoughts, feelings, and emotions becomes possible as the believer is washed by the sanctifying grace of God and led onward by His Spirit.

This interdisciplinary papery will have tremendous impact on the project of training and equipping spiritual leaders to minister deep-level healing in the context of the local church. As mentioned above, survey questions, guided prayer reflection, and other queries will be employed in engaging the inner life and identity. Through combining ACT therapy and Truth Therapy, a minister of deep-level healing can develop methods and models for engaging painful and harmful thoughts, feelings, and emotions with the best medicine any believer can apply: the Word of God. The project will offer strategies for dialogue and discussion that incorporates mindfulness, close examination of thoughts and feelings, and prescriptive prayer that speaks the life-giving, transforming

²⁴ Sanford, John Loren and Paula Sanford, *Transforming the Inner Man: God’s Powerful Principles for Inner Healing and Lasting Change* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2007), 17.

Word of God into the individual's life with an eye toward shifting identity into God's purposes.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapters outlined the Biblical, theological, historical, and interdisciplinary foundations of an integrative and holistic Wesleyan approach to deep-level healing, or, as it was called for the purposes of this project, inner healing. It is integrative, in that this model seeks to bring together a variety of Christian doctrines such as soteriology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology to bear upon a treatment of inner healing; it also attempts to integrate inner healing theories, modalities, and practices across the entirety of pastoral identity and ministry. It is holistic, in that this model posits that inner healing has ramifications for the entire individual – body, soul, and spirit, and that inner healing ministry can join other sources of healing – medicine, psychotherapy, social work – as part of a holistic treatment plan. It posits that deep-level healing for the whole person is possible when deep-seated emotional and spiritual wounds are met with the power of the Gospel. And it is Wesleyan, in that it mines the riches of Wesleyan spirituality and pastoral theology for insights into inner healing theology and practice.

The previous chapters and reflection on my own spiritual journey and ministry context formed the hypothesis that healing, which was part of early Methodist theology and practice, is all but absent in United Methodist churches today. It is my assertion that despite this absence within contemporary United Methodism, the ability to construct this

approach are present within the Wesleyan tradition, and that, through teaching and training, clergy could begin to conceptualize and articulate inner healing, understand some of its core concepts, and approach all of their ministry with an eye toward such healing.

This chapter will examine the research methodology and how data was gathered before, during, and after the project; it will describe in detail how the project was implemented. The data is analyzed and examined in light of the project's aims and goals. This will allow for ascertaining whether or not the project met its stated hypothesis. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of my own learning outcomes, how the project could be implemented in the future, and further areas of research.

Methodology

This project utilized a qualitative approach to gathering data, through survey questionnaires, focus group interviews, and open-ended reflection questions. These three data sets allowed me to triangulate my data; they were also employed with an eye toward a holistic understanding of growth in both an understanding and practice of inner healing informed by Wesleyan theology. I felt that using a qualitative approach to measuring growth in understanding and practice of inner healing and integrating inner healing into each participant's broader pastoral paradigm was most appropriate.

The before and after project survey questionnaires served to anchor the project and to provide a baseline for measuring growth in inner healing. As I developed my project, I realized that I was eager to examine four key areas: experience, theology, practice, and desire for growth. I sent the pre-survey via email to participants one week

before the project began, and the post-survey one day after it concluded. These surveys allowed me to ascertain from my participants these areas in their lives and ministries both before and after the project, thus providing data on any changes that occurred as a result of the training. The before and after surveys were almost identical, except for the final question, which aimed to gather from the participants, in their own words, any growth they had perceived they had over the course of the project.

The second data set I utilized was guided journaling questions. These questions were to guide reflection on prayer encounters that each participant would lead. The participants had two weeks after the training session to engage in and reflect on these five prayer encounters. A primary goal of these reflections was to promote a deeper understanding and growth in the participant as they developed a reflective practice on prayer. Another major goal of these reflections was to allow for participants to see and pursue themes of healing emerge in whatever context in which their prayer was offered, whether it was in a one-on-one pastoral care visit, within a worship service, or before a church function or meeting.

Interviews comprised the third data set for this project. I interviewed the focus group as a whole two weeks after the initial training and after their prayer encounters and held a one-on-one interview with one of the participants who could not join the entire focus group. These interviews allowed for further discussion and insight into their growth as a result of the training and prayer encounters and gave voice to the information captured in the prayer encounter reflections. They allowed for me to ask clarifying questions and to engage in narrative and phenomenological research.

The data collection yielded tremendous results, aiding me in testing my hypothesis in a variety of ways, both in gauging growth in theology and practice of inner healing, and in ascertaining how, if at all, the project could improve in future uses.

Implementation

For this project, I led a training seminar: “An Integrative, Holistic, Wesleyan Approach to Inner Healing.”¹ When I first developed this project, I had intended to hold this training seminar in person, accompanied by a session on practical ways to minister inner healing prayer. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not advisable to hold this training in person, or to practice hands-on inner healing prayer. So, the training occurred on Thursday, September 3, 2020 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. through Zoom video conference and involved both Power Point slides and a question and answer time. I had selected eight participants, all United Methodist clergy who pastor in close geographic proximity to me. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, one participant was not able to fully participate; therefore, seven completed the entire training program.

One week before the training session, I emailed my participants both the UTS approved consent form and the pre-project survey, asking them to read and sign the consent form and to answer each of the eleven questions on the survey; they then returned it to me before the start of the training because I did not want the training to

¹ While I have utilized the term “deep-level” healing previously, I chose inner healing for the project due to participants’ familiarity with that term and to clearly delineate inner healing from physical healing. Even though ministering inner healing can have physical ramifications, I wanted to be clear that this project was specifically centered on inner healing. And, since deep-level healing and inner healing can be used interchangeably, I found no issue with this usage.

influence their answers. They all completed this in a timely manner. I also outlined for them what to expect in the training session and how I anticipated them engaging in and reflecting on their five prayer encounters. All of this was met with enthusiasm and interest, as each participant expressed a desire to become familiar with inner healing.

The following is an outline of the three-hour training session:

1. Introduction and definition of inner healing
2. What the Bible says about inner healing
3. What the Wesleyan tradition says regarding inner healing
4. What does inner healing look like in various aspects of pastoral ministry
5. Three prayer models for ministering inner healing
6. Question and answer time
7. Conclusion

Two-thirds of the training program focused on education: defining terms, developing a Biblical, theological, and Wesleyan basis for such ministry, and an examination of how inner healing approach can affect all of pastoral ministry. I compiled the material for this part of the training, using material I developed and from other sources. One-third of the training centered on practice; specifically, discussion of three prayer models for ministering inner healing. I utilized excepts from the United Methodist Service of Healing I in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, Randy Clark's Five-Step Prayer Model, and a guided prayer meditation from Psalm 46 as three possible inner healing prayer paradigms. The question and answer part allowed for participants to offer further insight, share experiences with inner healing, ask clarifying questions, etc. After

approximately three hours, the training session wrapped up, with each participant clear on the next step of the project: prayer encounters.

After the instructional seminar, the major component to the project was that each participant engage in “prayer encounters.” They were to record and reflect on five prayer encounters following the training. This was to allow the participants to practice the information gleaned from the training seminar and to become practically familiar with the prayer models presented in the training. I gave each participant a series of five questions (the same set of queries for each encounter) to guide their reflection. As mentioned above, the setting of each prayer encounter varied widely; in fact, such variation was encouraged in order to probe the thesis that healing prayer can and should occur in a host of pastoral contexts. Participants were given two weeks, from September 3 to September 17, to engage in five prayer encounters and complete their journaling. All of the participants returned these in a timely manner; one participant was only able to complete three of the five prayer encounters.

The final portion of the project consisted of a focus group interview and final survey questionnaire. This occurred at 2 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2020. This allowed for those clergy involved in the project to offer further feedback, seek deeper clarity about inner healing, and, most importantly, to reflect as a group on the five prayer encounters. One participant was not able to join this focus group interview, so he was interviewed separately on Friday, September 18, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. After the focus group interviews, I sent each participant a post-project survey questionnaire via email. All of

these post-project survey questionnaires were returned to me by Monday, September 21, 2020.

There were two aspects of the project that had to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, the seminar portion originally included a time of hands-on training in a variety of inner healing prayer models. That was not possible. Secondly, the seminar would culminate with each participant leading the Service of Healing I from *The United Methodist Book of Worship* in their ministry context. Once again, this was not possible. To compensate for this, I adjusted the seminar to include a training in three types of prayer models, one of which was utilizing the liturgy from the Service of Healing I. This allowed for the participants to explore both the theological shape of the liturgy and the practical pieces pertinent to inner healing prayer.

Summary of Learning

Results of the Pre-Project Survey Questionnaire

This pre-project survey was imperative in ascertaining the starting point of each participant in relation to inner healing. This baseline proved crucial as I gathered data for my thesis. As I collected this data, I wanted to explore the following four areas in each participant's relationship to inner healing: experience, theology, practice, and desire for growth. The questions were structured in such a way as to probe these four areas. I looked for a variety of words and phrases to emerge in the data in order to gain insight into the participant's engagement with these four areas. This coding allowed me to comb my data with an eye toward each of these areas. I will begin by examining experience.

On the pre-project survey, I asked three open-ended questions that probed for participant's experience in relation to inner healing. One of the questions blended the participant's personal and professional experiences; one asked for their personal experience of inner healing, and one centered on experience of inner healing as a result of their pastoral ministry. This encouraged anecdotal and narrative responses and allowed me to look for common words and themes to emerge that would indicate experience. I was looking for the following words and themes in the responses: forgiveness, peace, love, hurt, healing, hope, prayer, presence, power, listening to God, hearing from God, and seeing God. In this way, I was able to code the data and utilize the coding to aid in triangulation and to more closely examine each data set for experience, theology, practice, and desire for growth. I was also looking for any instances of a physical result pertaining to an inner healing experience evident across the data sets. On the pre-project survey, the first experience question was in two parts, so I will handle them separately, and will utilize tables to display and analyze the data garnered from each response.

Table 1. Experience: Do You Believe That God Acts & Responds to Prayer?

Response	Total	% of total	Cumulative %
Yes	8	100%	100%
No	0	0%	0%
Other	0	0%	0%

Each participant responded that God does answer prayer, and most of them offered additional data on how they perceive this divine activity. Responses included phrases such as "Often the response is there prior to the request"; "the ways that God

responds to our prayer is different than human expectation”; “I also believe that God responds before we are even aware of our need or utter a word of prayer.” I attribute this supplementary information to the open-ended questions which allowed for further and more detailed responses from my participants. From the pre-project survey, it became clear that each participant not only believes that God does act and respond to prayer, but that God acts and responds in particular ways that correspond to His nature and will.

The second part of the first experiential question is dealt with in the following graph:

Table 2: Experience: Results of Answered Prayer

Results of Answered Prayer	Number of Incidents
Physical Healing	8
Inner Healing	2
Peace	3
Compassion	2
Hope	2
Strength	2
Forgiveness	4

The responses to this question were both expected and surprising. I was not surprised to see themes of compassion, hope, peace, strength, and transformation emerge. However, that all eight participants reported some instance of physical healing as a result of answered prayer was very surprising. This was surprising because, in my experience, explicit, intentional prayer for physical healing is not a prevalent practice among United

Methodists in my immediate context. This was also hopeful, because it revealed both an experience of healing and of praying for healing, which I felt would come to bear on openness to ministering inner healing. I was not surprised to see inner healing reported in only 25% of respondents, as anticipated, and other data indicated, that participants had a rudimentary conception of inner healing, and a few offered no definition of inner healing at all.

The pre-project survey questionnaires offered insight into each participant's theology of inner healing. This was approached through the following questions:

- in your own words, how would you describe your understanding of inner healing?
- What is your understanding of how United Methodists conceive of and practice inner healing?

There were varying degrees of theological depth and sophistication when answering these questions, with some not offering any theological understanding at all. The following table will explicate the theological understanding of inner healing held by the participants according to the pre-project survey questionnaire:

Table 3: Theology of Inner Healing

Theological basis for or result of inner healing	Number of Respondents
Sanctification	1
Transformation	3
Restoration/Reconciliation	3
Impartation of Grace	2
Encounter with Jesus	1

The sparseness of the theological responses was unsurprising. A few participants indicated they did not have any understanding of a theological basis or theological implications of inner healing, while a couple other respondents offered that inner healing is simply healing attained without the use of medicine. This pre-project data indicated that a deeper theological basis for inner healing was necessary for these participants.

Very few of those surveyed offered anything by way of understanding how United Methodists conceive of and practice inner healing. Three respondents said they were completely unaware of any United Methodist teaching and practice, and three others offered a vague reference to John Wesley without any specifics. Two participants indicated a more nuanced theological understanding. One responded that “I think that inner healing was part of the purpose of the early classes and accountability groups.” The other participant offered this: “Inner healing is part of our understanding of grace...Scriptural holiness encourages us to seek inner healing for the recreation of ourselves and the world.” That a couple participants could construct an understanding of inner healing that clearly reflected core Wesleyan concepts was helpful in gauging respondents’ pre-project theological framework.

Practice was the next area of focus of the pre-project survey questionnaire. I wanted to see if any participant already had a spiritual practice related to inner healing, such as a prayer ministry or otherwise, either in their parish ministry or personal life. The data was not surprising. Questions centering on practice were:

- Do you have prayer practice in your personal devotional life?
- How does prayer factor into your pastoral ministry?

- What would a prayer ministry or ministry focused on inner healing look like within the context of your pastoral ministry?

The first two questions did not yield any surprising results. One hundred percent of respondents revealed they had a personal prayer practice, thought the prayer practices varied greatly. All reported incorporating prayer into their ministry in various ways – through pastoral care, worship, before meetings, over the phone, and as part of small groups. One participant poignantly replied that prayer is the act of reflecting God's very nature, for God is one who listens out of deep love and empathy and acts out of compassion. Judging from the pre-project survey questionnaire, each participant had some form of personal prayer life and approached their pastoral ministry prayerfully in myriad ways and would be comfortable in exploring new ways to incorporate into their preexisting prayer ministries.

The third question dealing with practice revealed the most helpful data, in that it allowed for insight into the needs of each particular participant's ministry context and how they wanted to engage inner healing. It was intentionally a more hypothetical question, asking for the respondent to anticipate what inner healing might look like in their ministry setting rather than what already existed. The results are analyzed in the following table:

Table 4. Practice: What Would Inner Healing Ministry Look Like in Your Setting?

Potential Impact of Inner Healing Ministry	Number of Respondents
New parish ministry (small group, worship service, etc)	6
Integrated ministry (affecting all areas of ministry)	1

Deeper relationship with God	1
Unsure at this time	1

Seventy-five percent of those surveyed indicated a desire for some sort of inner healing ministry within their pastoral context, whether it was a new worship service, a new prayer ministry team, or enhancing and building on something that already existed. This revealed that the majority of participants were interested in bringing inner healing more concretely and seriously to their flock.

Finally, the pre-project survey questionnaire was analyzed for desire for growth in inner healing. As indicated already, particularly with the last question examined, most participants exhibited a desire to grow so that they could more effectively minister in their parishes. The final question in this data set, “what would you like to receive from a training on inner healing and its integration within Wesleyanism and the larger pastoral ministry,” dealt explicitly with desire for growth, and is assessed as follows:

Table 5: Desired Participant Outcomes

Areas of Growth	Respondents
Deeper understanding of Wesleyanism	6
Personal growth in healing prayer	3
Ability to articulate inner healing	2
Intimacy with the Holy Spirit	2
Ability to train others	1

I was pleased to see that the majority of those surveyed desired to anchor their training in a more thorough and intentional understanding of Wesleyanism and how a Wesleyan might develop and practice inner healing. Through analyzing the responses to other questions in light of desire for growth, and in examining the results of this question, it was clear that respondents did not feel able to clearly articulate a theology and practice of inner healing from a Wesleyan perspective, so seeing a desire for growth in this area reflected in the data was unsurprising, yet very encouraging as we approached the teaching seminar. Several expressed desire for their own spiritual growth and intimacy with the Holy Spirit and for the ability to express themselves more confidently when ministering healing.

Results of Questions for Guided Reflection on Prayer Encounters

As mentioned above, there were two major components to the project: a three-hour training seminar and five participant-led prayer encounters, during which each person would have the opportunity to put into practice the prayer models learned during the training or another prayer paradigm that would fit the context of the prayer. The instructions for these five prayer encounters were straightforward and simple: engage in five prayer encounters over two weeks and journal about those experiences using questions for reflection. The context could be a prayer during a corporate worship service, as part of a pastoral care call or visit, before a meeting, or another time. The reason for this diversity of context was intentional: I wanted the participants to begin to integrate inner healing prayer ministry within the totality of their pastoral office. I also wanted those involved to begin to see inner healing prayer as something that can be offered in innumerable ways and places.

There were thirty-two individual entries for this data set. Six participants completed all five of the prayer encounters, and one individual completed three. The following table records the contexts, or ministry settings, for all thirty-two of the prayer encounters:

Table 6: Context for Prayer Encounters

Setting	Total	% of Total	Cumulative %
Pastoral Care	16	48%	48%
Worship	9	27%	75%
Small Groups	5	15%	90%
Meetings	3	10%	100%

The prayer encounters proceeded as I expected, with almost half of them situated in a pastoral care context. This certainly lends itself most fittingly to inner healing prayer, and seems to be a natural, comfortable scenario for seeking God for healing. It is also an atmosphere conducive to confidentiality, trust, and follow-up. I was pleased to see a few other contexts, though, which indicated that these clergy are becoming more comfortable seeking God for healing in situations beyond pastoral care.

Participants were able to infer a healing content or theme from most prayer encounters. Several prayers were for physical healing which, of course, is often connected to or has implications for inner healing. However, I was pleased to see some of the participants go after the deep level issues of inner healing, such as forgiveness, bitterness, anger, and shame. The pastors who participated dug deeper and understood

that these physical issues had deeper, emotional and spiritual causes. The following table records the healing content or theme of the thirty-three prayer encounters:

Table 7: Healing Theme of Prayer Encounters

Theme	Total	% of Total	Cumulative %
Physical Healing	11	33%	33%
Forgiveness	6	18%	51%
Peace	6	18%	69%
Freedom	4	12%	81%
Shame	2	6%	87%
Identity	2	6%	93%
Other	2	6%	100%

It is noteworthy that most of the prayers focused on physical healing. When examining the other responses to these prayer encounters and sifting through the data provided it was clear to me that, when praying for something like physical healing, the participants were able to dig deeper into underlying emotional and spiritual wounds pertinent to inner healing. For example, one participant recorded praying for physical healing and yet, in employing Randy Clark's Five Step Prayer Model, realized that the physical issues were likely manifestations of deep emotional wounds rooted in childhood trauma. The pastor encouraged a holistic approach in handling it going forward (referring the parishioner to a therapist) and continuing to engage the person in inner healing ministry.

The teaching seminar emphasized the imperative of allowing the love of God to flow through the one praying to the person receiving prayer. The prayer leaders felt that most of the prayer encounters were able to clearly and effectively communicate the love of God. Most also felt that they would not have done anything differently in the prayer after reflecting on it. Finally, there were two key takeaways from question five, “what do you see as the result of this prayer,” that surfaced across the thirty-three prayer encounters. First, each participant gave the person who received prayer some sort of follow-up activity. It may have been asking for forgiveness from someone they had wronged, a commitment to follow-up with further prayer, or simply observing their body language at a later time and inferring a lasting peace or joy. It was helpful to see that there seemed to be some sort of continued interaction or accountability as a result of the prayer encounter.

Results of Focus Group Interview & Post-Project Survey Questionnaire

The focus group interview was conducted on September 17, 2020 and was an opportunity for the seven participants who finished the training to offer feedback, thoughts, ask for clarification, and engage in further discussion on both the seminar material and the fire prayer encounters. The post-project survey contained the same questions as the pre-project survey, with the exception of the final question. This was to help determine if there were any significant learnings reported from the participants as a result of the training seminar and prayer encounters. I will briefly summarize any changes from the pre-project survey questionnaire here and then focus more closely on the final question, which deviated from the pre-project survey questionnaire.

In the focus group interview, participants shared mostly about the five prayer encounters. Each pastor appreciated the questions for reflection; in fact, they indicated a desire to continue to utilize a reflective prayer practice in their ministry. That is a significant result of the training seminar. Another important takeaway from the training seminar that influenced the prayer encounters was the understanding of inner healing as a rehabilitation of the *imago Dei*. This learning is significant for a few reasons: it grounds an inner healing prayer practice in central tenet of Wesleyan theology, and it changed the fundamental nature of the prayer focus for these prayer encounters. Each participant reflected almost the exact same sentiment; that is, to see the work of inner healing prayer as an exercise in cooperative grace whereby the person praying is being used as a conduit for the restorative grace of God to work in another's life gave them energy and passion in praying. Thirdly, this learning indicates that the training seminar had a direct impact on the participant's prayer practice, since this theological claim was part of the seminar.

The focus group interview pointed to something in the training seminar that could be different in future use. Based on some of the feedback from the respondents, the training seminar could be clearer in elucidating what inner healing is *not*. At times, participants seemed to indicate that praying for peace or hope for someone was in itself an exercise in inner healing ministry. I would posit, however, that peace and joy are fruit that comes through an intentional prayer ministry aimed at healing deep wounds, pains, traumas, and memories. They are a result, not the thing itself. This is an area to clarify and articulate more clearly in a future training.

Most of the responses to the post-project survey questionnaire remained the same; however, there were a few notable differences that point to participants' growth in experience, theology, and practice. It became clear that participants could articulate a Wesleyan and theological ground for inner healing more clearly and with more confidence than before. One respondent, who had indicated nothing in the pre-project survey questionnaire on the question about United Methodists practice of inner healing, wrote that "inner healing can be a way we care for the whole human being created in the image of God. Inner healing is the work of restoring us to the holy image which has been marred by sin in our lives." This sort of theological articulation reveals substantial growth during the project.

The following table outlines responses to the final question of the post-project survey questionnaire, "what is one key learning you received from this training on inner healing and its integration within Wesleyanism and the larger pastoral ministry?"

Table 8. One Key Learning from the Project

Learning	Respondents
Theology of the <i>imago Dei</i>	7
Integrating inner healing into all of ministry	5
Desire to train laity	5
Growth in Wesleyan Theology	4
Desire to begin a prayer ministry	2

I was pleased and a bit surprised to see a theology of the *imago Dei* as a learning that all respondents received. Another learning that I did not necessarily anticipate was

five out of seven pastors desired to in turn train laity in inner healing prayer ministry, whether with an individual, as part of a small group, or a prayer ministry team. That is important feedback for me, in that it indicates an interest for clergy to establish this sort of ministry in their church; it also points to their confidence in laity ministering inner healing. It also reveals a change from the data recorded on the pre-project survey questionnaire, which recorded that few were interested in gaining the tools and knowledge to train others. Clearly there was something gained during the training that caused a shift in desire for expanding inner healing ministry to trained laity.

Testing the Hypothesis

As previously stated, the hypothesis for this project was that contemporary United Methodism lacks a theology and practice of inner healing, and yet, Wesleyanism lends itself to a holistic, integrative inner healing paradigm that touches on all aspects of ministry. An analysis of the data, much of which has already been established, seems to support the hypothesis. A triangulation of the data – the pre/post project surveys, the focus group interviews, and the journal reflection questions for prayer encounters – reveals that all of the participants who completed the entire training indicated growth in theology, practice and desire for further growth in inner healing ministry.

While triangulation of the data reveals strong support of the hypothesis, the post-project survey questionnaire offered some of the clearest insight. Consider one response to the final question, which asked respondents to relay one key learning from the project: “There is often more going on than the actual request and I should be listening for the inner struggle going on, and how it is manifesting itself in an external way. In this way, prayer can bring in the restoration of the *imago Dei* within the person.” This sort of

learning is exactly what I had hoped would be gained from this project. To connect deep listening and discernment – a necessary component to ministering inner healing – with the Biblical, theological, and historical material from the training seminar, especially the emphasis on the *imago Dei* in the individual – reveals that the project succeeded.

The three key words in the project title were *integrative*, *holistic*, and *Wesleyan*. My desire was that through the project, participants would exhibit a deeper understanding and growth in how to integrate inner healing, how to minister holistically, and how to do so from a solidly Wesleyan framework. I believe that the data shows this occurred. Participants sought ways to integrate healing into their whole ministry; not simply in prayer ministry, but in teaching, Bible study, administration, and more. One participant met with a parishioner who was dealing with emotional and spiritual wounds from childhood verbal abuse. The pastor then developed a plan to continue to meet and pray with this person, while also making a plan for her to meet with a therapist and a psychiatrist. This is a holistic approach to inner healing. In fact, before the project, the pastor indicated that he had not considered that an inner healing prayer ministry could be part of an overall approach to dealing with such issues. Finally, the data reveals that most participants were able to approach inner healing in Wesleyan terms. Therefore, I believe the hypothesis was upheld and the project met its stated goals.

Conclusion

The participants in this project gained tremendous knowledge of foundational concepts of inner healing ministry. Everyone who participated was able to articulate, both in writing and in speech, an understanding of inner healing, the Biblical and Wesleyan

foundation upon which it is built, and how to pray in a variety of contexts for others with an eye toward ministering to the emotional and spiritual hurt they carry. To varying degrees, all of the participating pastors indicated change both in their personal and professional lives.

The data suggests there is the potential for a lasting impact in the local churches which the participants pastor. Eighty percent of the pastors said they would like to establish this ministry in their churches or receive further training themselves. In fact, one of the participants has already contact me to offer this same training program to the congregational care ministry team in the church. I am eager to explore how this project can be adapted for laity; that will offer the clergy who received this training a paradigm for bringing it to their local churches and leading the training themselves. The rate of enthusiasm and desire for this ministry to continue in these churches coupled with the wide range of demographic differences in these churches (ethnic, rural, suburban, size, etc.) and among the clergy who participated indicates that there is a wide interest and acceptance of this ministry within United Methodism.

While the project was a success and upheld the hypothesis, there are several things that I would adjust or change in future trainings. Further exploration and differentiation between what constitutes inner healing ministry and its subsequent fruits would be important. This was revealed in the prayer encounter reflections and the post-project survey questionnaire. Some clergy were still engaged in prayers that were marginally geared toward inner healing. Additional clarification might also be needed on what inner healing is not. The training seminar could be modified in these ways.

Another way I would modify this training program would be to have a time of testimony at the end, perhaps adding a second session after the prayer encounters portion or as part of the focus group interview. The participants reported some incredible prayer encounters, and I would have liked to have had space for the testimonies. Such testimonies do two things: they build faith in those who hear them, and they publicly give God the glory for what He has done. This could also establish and normalize testimony as part of inner healing ministry; it is my experience that intentional testimony time is not common in United Methodist churches.

As mentioned in the introduction, COVID-19 changed the way this project was implemented. It was impossible to gather in person and practice hands-on prayer ministry, which is what the project originally envisioned. Furthermore, participants were not able to lay hands on those for whom they prayed in the prayer encounters. I would be interested in doing the project again once physical contact is safe and permissible and measuring how introducing touch might change the one praying and the one receiving prayer.

The second aspect that changed due to the coronavirus pandemic was holding a service of healing using the sanctioned liturgy of The United Methodist Church, “A Service of Healing I” found in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. My original plan was to train participants and then have them lead this service in their ministry context and then offer written reflections on that. Since that was not possible at the time of the project, I added some of the liturgy into the training seminar; this offered those receiving the training a prayer model to utilize that incorporated elements from our liturgy. While not the same as implementing the service of healing, it at least gave an opportunity to

teach about our healing liturgy and give participants a chance to use it in their prayer encounters if they desired. In a future implementation, I would like to add the “Service of Healing I” to the project.

There is a Biblical, historical, and theological foundation for inner healing. Given the heightened pain, trauma, anger, and unrest in the nation and world, this type of ministry has great potential to transform individuals, families, and entire communities. God desires wholeness for his entire creation and, because of the finished work of Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are given the incredible honor and privilege of ministering to the broken and the hurting. The good news is that there is freedom in Christ! Thanks be to God!

APPENDIX A
PRE-PROJECT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Inner Healing/Prayer Questions
Pre-project Survey/Questionnaire
August 31, 2020

- 1) In your own words, how would you describe your understanding of inner healing?
- 2) In your own words, how would you describe your understanding of the relationship between prayer and inner healing?
- 3) Do you believe that God acts & responds to prayer? If so, how have you seen this occur in your life and ministry?
- 4) Do you have a story of receiving inner healing? If so, please describe briefly:
- 5) Do you have a prayer practice in your personal devotional life?
- 6) How does prayer factor into your pastoral ministry?
- 7) Have you seen inner healing occur through your ministry? If so, please describe briefly:
- 8) What is your understanding of how United Methodists conceive of and practice inner healing?
- 9) What, if any, are hesitations, concerns, or questions you have about inner healing ministry?
- 10) What would a prayer ministry or ministry focused on inner healing look like within the context of your ministry?
- 11) What would you like to receive from a training on inner healing and its integration within Wesleyanism and the larger pastoral ministry?

APPENDIX B
POST-PROJECT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Inner Healing/Prayer Questions
Post-project Survey Questionnaire
September 17, 2020

- 1) In your own words, how would you describe your understanding of inner healing?
- 2) In your own words, how would you describe your understanding of the relationship between prayer and inner healing?
- 3) Do you believe that God acts & responds to prayer? If so, how have you seen this occur in your life and ministry?
- 4) Do you have a story of receiving inner healing? If so, please describe briefly:
- 5) Do you have a prayer practice in your personal devotional life?
- 6) How does prayer factor into your pastoral ministry?
- 7) Have you seen inner healing occur through your ministry? If so, please describe briefly:
- 8) What is your understanding of how United Methodists conceive of and practice inner healing?
- 9) What, if any, are hesitations, concerns, or questions you have about inner healing ministry?
- 10) What would a prayer ministry or ministry focused on inner healing look like within the context of your ministry?
- 11) What is one key learning you received from this training on inner healing and its integration within Wesleyanism and the larger pastoral ministry?

APPENDIX C
GUIDED PRAYER REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Questions for Guided Reflection for Prayer Encounters:

- 1) What was the context of the prayer (meeting, worship, pastoral care, etc):
- 2) What was the healing content or theme of the prayer?
- 3) How was God's love expressed in the prayer?
- 4) Upon reflection, is there anything you would have done differently in this prayer encounter?
- 5) What do you see as the result of this prayer (healing, peace, inviting God's presence, etc)?

APPENDIX D

CODES

Forgiveness

Healing

Hearing from God

Holistic

Hope

Hurt

Inner Healing

Integrative

Listening to God

Love

Physical Healing

Power

Prayer

Presence

Seeing God

Sick

Transformation

Wesleyan

APPENDIX E
TEACHING SLIDES

AN INTEGRATIVE, HOLISTIC, WESLEYAN PRACTICE OF INNER HEALING



LET'S DEFINE SOME TERMS:

- **Integrative:** the intent of this teaching & practice is to aid in clergy integration of inner healing with their entire pastoral ministry.
- **Holistic:** inner healing ministry that stands alone: its relationship with other doctrines and disciplines must be explored and understood. It looks at Biblical ministry for the viewpoint of the entire individual and the totality of Christian teaching and ministry.
- **Wesleyan:** this teaching & practice on inner healing comes from a Wesleyan viewpoint, in that it is interested in how the Wesleys conceived of inner healing and how this ministry relates to Wesleyan distinctives as holiness, preventer grace, and Christian perfection.
- **Practice:** participants will put the teaching into practice through a few learned models of healing prayer and then share their experience of ministry.

WHAT IS INNER HEALING?

"Deep-level healing [inner healing] is a ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit aimed at bringing healing and freedom to the whole person, spirit, emotions, and body...deep-level healing focuses on healing the hurts held in memories, often by helping people to experience Jesus' presence in the memories and to give to him the hurts. Specific problems often encountered are unforgiveness, anger, depression, shame, guilt, low self-esteem, fear, worry, lust, rejection, deception, and the like."

- CHARLES KRAFT



"Inner healing refers to the healing of the traumatic memories of life and their effects, such as the pain of abandonment, loneliness, anxiety, and fear. Inner healing means going back and filling the moments in life that lacked love and understanding. Inner healing fills in the gaps between the love that was needed and the love that was received...then the person moves to a deeper healing, from which the experience can be seen in a positive light."

FR. RICHARD MCALEAR



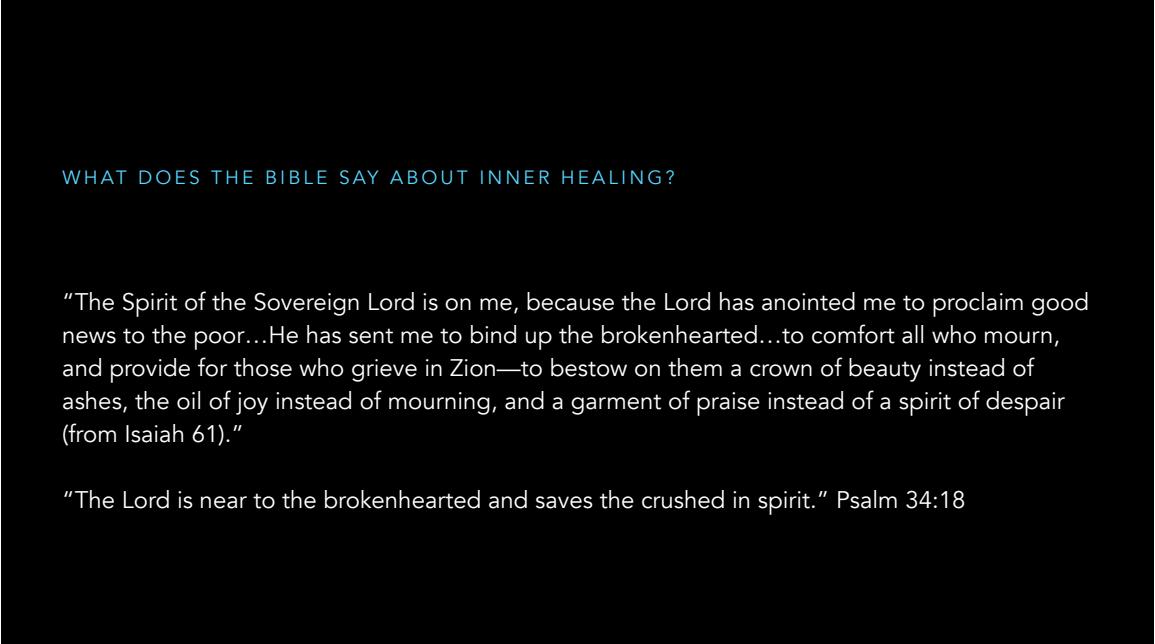
WHAT INNER HEALING IS NOT...

- PSYCHOTHERAPY/COUNSELING
- PSYCHIATRY
- MEDICINE
- SOCIAL WORK

It is imperative that clergy/churches “know their lane” and see inner healing ministry and prayer as an holistic companion with other health and wellness treatment(s), not in place of these endeavors.

Confidentiality, trust, and boundaries are ABSOLUTELY VITAL!

And clergy must know when to refer!



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT INNER HEALING?

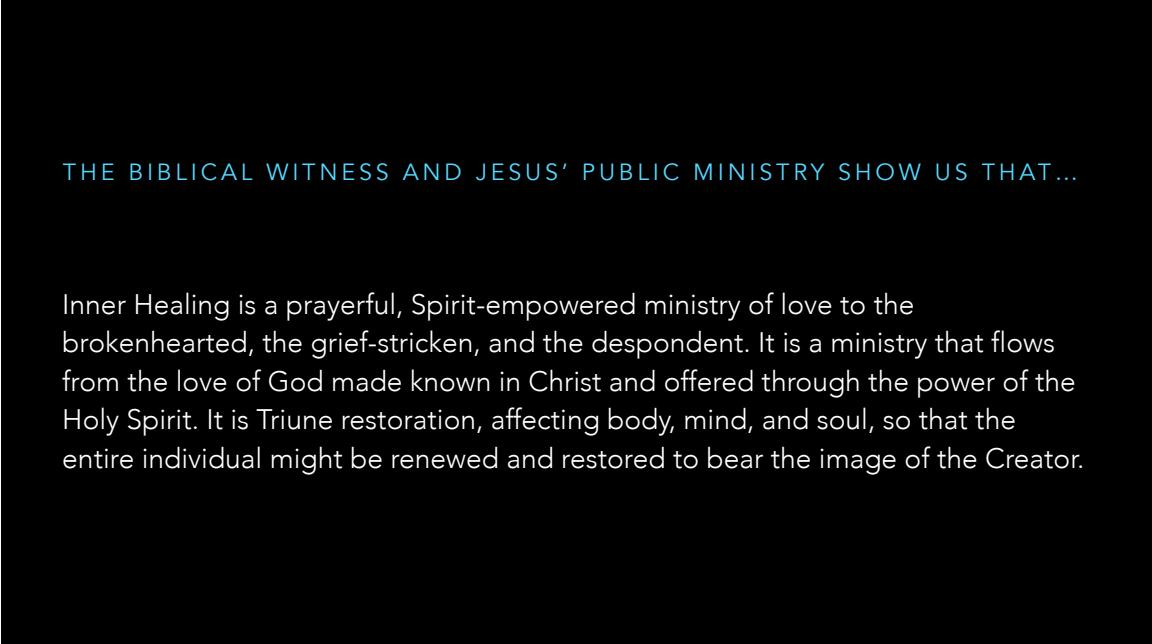
"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair (from Isaiah 61)."

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY WAS ONE OF
INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC INNER HEALING

MARK 2 - JESUS AND THE
PARALYZED MAN
JOHN 4 - THE SAMARITAN WOMAN
JOHN 8 - THE WOMAN CHARGED
WITH ADULTERY
JOHN 21 - JESUS AND PETER





THE BIBLICAL WITNESS AND JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY SHOW US THAT...

Inner Healing is a prayerful, Spirit-empowered ministry of love to the brokenhearted, the grief-stricken, and the despondent. It is a ministry that flows from the love of God made known in Christ and offered through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is Triune restoration, affecting body, mind, and soul, so that the entire individual might be renewed and restored to bear the image of the Creator.

WHAT DOES THE WESLEYAN TRADITION SAY ABOUT INNER HEALING?

Wesleyan soteriology - the doctrine of salvation - offers a starting point with its emphasis on the restoration of the image of God within the individual



"Our nature is distempered, as well as enslaved; the whole head is faint, and the whole heart is sick. Our body, soul, and spirit, are infected, overspread, consumed, with the most fatal leprosy..."

What is this sickness? Sin.

What is the solution? God's love mediated by God's Spirit.

"The renewal of our nature in this love being not only the one end of our creation and our redemption, but likewise of all the providences of God over us, and all the operations of his Spirit in us, must be...the one thing needful....love is the very image of God: it is the brightness of his glory. By love man is not only made like God, but in some sense one with him."

-FROM JOHN WESLEY'S SERMON "THE ONE THING NEEDFUL"

For Wesley, salvation wasn't just the justification of the individual so that he or she could go to heaven someday. The nascent Methodist movement taught full salvation and its benefits as a present reality.

Consider the words to "And Are We Yet Alive" by Charles Wesley:

"Preserved by power divine, to full salvation here..."

*"Then let us make our boast, of his redeeming power, which saves us to the uttermost,
till we can sin no more"*

A HYMN BY CHARLES WESLEY, "A HYMN FOR ONE ABOUT TO TAKE HIS MEDICINE":

Hail, great Physician of Mankind!
Jesus Thou art from Every Ill,
Health in Thine only Name we find;
Thy Name doth in the Medicine heal.

Thy Name the fainting Soul restores,
Strength to the languid Body brings,
Renews exhausted Nature's Powers,
And bears us as on Eagle's Wings.

Faith in Thy Sovereign Name I have,
And wait its healing Power to know,
Assured, that It my Flesh shall save,
Till all thy Work is done below.

Then, Saviour, for my Spirit call,
My Spirit all-conformed to Thine,
And let This Tabernacle fall,
To rise rebuilt by Hands Divine.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF DIVINE HEALING RECORDED IN JOHN WESLEY'S JOURNALS...

- Entry from May 1741: Wesley prays for his own healing and receives it
- Entry from November 1741: Wesley prays for a mistress of Kingswood school and she recovers
- Entry from June 1742: Wesley describes a woman being healed of serious emotional distress

FURTHER KEY WESLEYAN DOCTRINAL POINTS IN RELATION TO HEALING:

- Healing is a work of *free grace* (distinct from *cooperative grace*); that is, the work of God alone.
- Healing should prompt the one who is healed to a life of deeper holiness (set apart for God)
- Healing is related to Christian perfection, i.e. being “made perfect in love.” We are able enter into this as the image of God is renewed and restored within the individual.

THEREFORE:

A theology & practice of healing was normative for Wesley & the early Methodists!



WHAT DOES INNER HEALING LOOK LIKE IN OTHER AREAS

OF PASTORAL MINISTRY



INNER HEALING THEMES RUN THROUGH
EVERYTHING WE DO:

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Sacraments
- Administration
- Pastoral Care & Counseling
- Mission Work

CLERGY CAN BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT INNER HEALING THEMES THAT EMERGE IN OUR MINISTRIES.

PEOPLE ARE SEARCHING FOR:

- Hope
- Purpose
- Wholeness
- Freedom
- Community

INTEGRATING INNER HEALING INTO PASTORAL MINISTRY

THREE PRAYER MODELS



PRAYERS FROM THE UNITED METHODIST BOOK OF WORSHIP

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE SERVICE OF HEALING I

THE SERVICE OF HEALING I

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

James 5:14-16a

*Prayer for Healing and Wholeness
with Laying on of Hands and
Anointing with Oil:*

"Name, I lay my hands on you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit [for specified purpose].

May the power of God's indwelling presence heal you of all illnesses—of body, mind, spirit, and relationships—that you may serve God with a loving heart. Amen."

*Prayer After Laying on of Hands/
Anointing with Oil:*

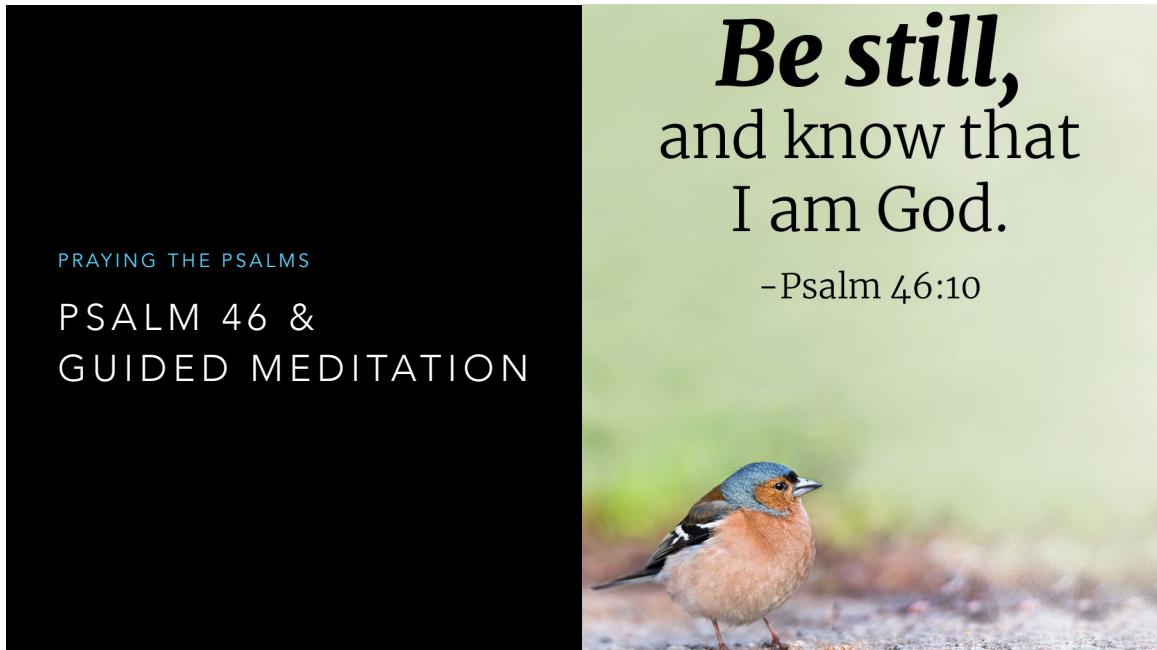
"Almighty God, we pray that (Names), (our brothers and sisters) may be comforted in their suffering and made whole. When they are afraid, give them courage; when they feel weak, grant them your strength; when they are afflicted, afford them patience; when they are lost, offer them hope; when they are alone, move us to their side; [when death comes, open your arms to receive him/her]. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen."

RANDY CLARK'S

FIVE-STEP PRAYER MODEL



- INTERVIEW
- PRAYER SELECTION
- PRAYER MINISTRY
- RE-INTERVIEW
- POST-PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS



THIS PRAYER MODEL UTILIZES PSALM 46 AS A WAY
TO GUIDE PEOPLE INTO INNER HEALING

- Listen for/focus in on a particular word
- Allow the individual to find their place within the Psalm
- Integrate God's presence with the pain, trauma, memory, or woundedness that needs healing. "Be still, and know that I am God."
- Offer prayer



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